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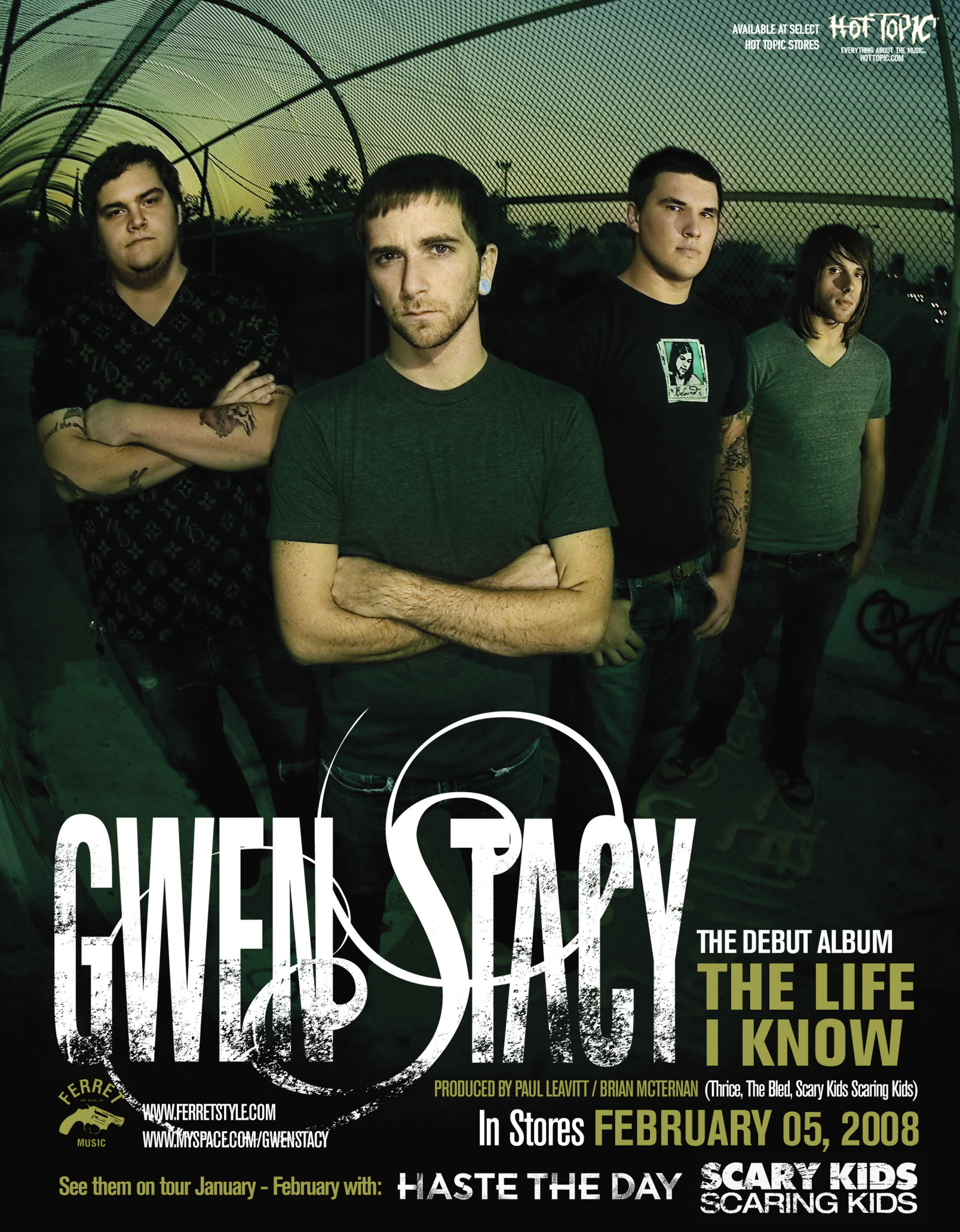
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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

MAMA (PRONOUNCED MAW-MAW)

While not exclusive to the state, there is a predomination in Texas of a rich heritage and tradition of endearing names for grandparents. You probably couldn't bump into any Texas native that doesn't have a grandparent named "Pa Pa" or "Pe-Paw." I was blessed to marry into all-Texas families ... and thus have a set of Ma-Maw/Pa-Paw's and Me-Maw/Pe-Paw's. Of course, they are wonderful and love their granddaughter and grandson-in-law. Recently our MaMa's body has been invaded by Cancer. It's with a heavy heart that we write, edit and pay attention to all the little details that go into a magazine. We dedicate this issue to our MaMa. She's given us great joy and encouragement, refreshing our hearts many a time with her love and hospitality. It was with grief that we said goodbye to her on November 21. We rejoice, though, that she no doubt said "Hello" face-to-face with Jesus on that same date.

On a different subject: I want to graciously live in peace amongst people of all faiths, no matter what the belief system. Nevertheless, after reading the fascinating and well-written story on Full Blown Chaos and after checking out the Universal Life Church referenced in the story, I feel compelled to point out that a co-mingling of diametrically opposing philosophies regarding spirituality is regarded as heresy by many biblical scholars. When one faith regards Jesus as nothing more than a great man/philosopher and another declares Him to be the divine Messiah, it's hard to honestly conclude that the two thoughts can peacefully reside inside the brain and conscience of a believer. One must choose to decide which one is, shall we say, deluded. This magazine has a unique identity that's partly rooted in New Testament theology, and from time to time there'll be reason to point out something like this, even if it appears that we're "splitting theological hairs." Trust me, I wouldn't bring it up if I didn't think it was important.

And finally, I wanted to share two great songs that've been bringing me great joy lately: "Deathbed" by Relient K and "The Glory Of It All" by David Crowder Band. Check 'em out and tell me if you don't agree they're great.

Grace and Peace

SPINNING AT HM NOW

NEW WORLD SON	*Salvation Station*	Bluesy old old older school rock. Very fun.
DUG PINNICK	*Strum Sum Up*	Easily his best solo album. Call it "Jacob rock."
THE MYRIAD	*Prelude To Arrows*	These guys "got it." I can't wait for *Arrows.*
ATHLETE	*Beyond the Neighbourhood*	Slow, brooding, quiet, powerful.
THIEVES & LIARS	*When Dreams Become...*	Southern metal can hardly go wrong.
SOUNDS UNDER...	*Cinematica*	Austin band rocks with Lang Freeman's hot vox.
LOVE SIMPLE	*Flying.../Once.../Best...*	Three volumes of stripped-down worship.

REGULAR

Letters 10
Hard news 12
Live report 17
Staff picks 19

FEATURETTE

Far-less 18

FEATURE

Bradley hathaway 22
Inked in blood 24
A plea for purging 26
Pillar 28
Full blown chaos 30
Pillar poster 32
Thrice 36
Here i come falling 40
Korn says 43

INTERMISSION

Columns 54

REVIEW

Music 47
DVD, book, & gadgets 52
Indie pick 56

Letters to the Edit

MOST POWERFUL HM FANS

Here is a picture of MM2 (SS) Kyle Hick and myself on a West Pacific deployment in port at the Republic of Phillipines. We get your magazine delivered to the submarine when we are in port, and it helps pass the time when we are at sea. Keep putting out the quality work that you guys do, and we'll keep enjoying it!
–STS2 (SS) Scott A. Dean, via internet

Ed – Thanks for serving our country!

GET YOUR RATINGS RIGHT!

Yeah, page 62 in the Demon Hunter issue, you have Emery – *An Ocean Between Us* rated as a 4... So, is this "I'm Only a Man" rating, or is it As I Lay Dying's rating? As much as I would want Emery to put out the greatest metal album in 20 years, I somehow doubt it by the review you wrote. (In a second email) Yeah, so I was reading the amazing flip cover edition of HM magazine and was reading the news bullets on the Jonah33 page and noticed that Drop Dead, Gorgeous was highlighted... From what I understand, this means that you would recommend that band to Christian listeners, but I picked up their latest album, "Worse Than A Fairy Tale" and noticed a parental advisory sticker on it. Just giving you a little heads up and was wondering what you thought of the new album...
–David Jarman, via internet

Ed – You stink! I was so stoked about the last issue ... until I got your email! Ha ha. What a goof I made! I use the previous issue's content as a template a lot of times, carefully replacing old content with new. In that case, I missed updating the new I'm Only A Man album title. Yikes! But those ratings (4 & 3.5) are for Emery. AILD got 4 &5, respectively, from myself and the writer. I, too, recently picked up the new Drop Dead Gorgeous album and noticed that sticker. I emailed their ole publicist (they just switched labels to Suretone/Universal). While DDG has believers in it, they are "definitely not" a "Christian band." Based on their debut album on Rise Records, we thought they were.

FLIPPED OFF

I have subscribed to HM or its predecessor since 1989. I have been disappointed by the recent double flip cover issues, because they break your long-standing policy of reserving the back page for the Lord and not having advertising on the back page. Maybe your magazine should consider using recycled paper to reduce damage to the environment.
–Wilf Csaplar Jr., via internet

Ed – It's kind of odd to disappoint someone else in regards to a policy that I devised myself as kind of a freewill offering. I guess that's a good sign that you like the policy. The message is important to me, which is why you saw it on page 51 of that issue. I'll look into the paper. We might be using partially recycled paper already.

GOD BLESS YOU

God bless you. You really are changing people with this magazine.
–Brittney Moore, via internet

Ed – Wow! Is that the coolest thing ever, or what? If God can use us, we're honored.

THRICE

I just picked up my copy of Thrice *The Alchemy Index Vol I and II Fire and Water*. It totally rocks and the lyrics are extremely well written. I can't wait to see the next issue with them. Good job supporting these guys. If it wasn't for your last article on them, which I still have, I would have never known about them. Hoping all is going well. I haven't heard from you in a while just thought I'd send out that little thank you.
–Clint Fogie, via internet

THERE'S NOWHERE TO GET HM

I used to buy the mag at Grapevine Christian Bookstores in Houston, but they just closed recently and all of the other Christian bookstores don't carry the mag. If you can do anything about this ordeal, I would ever so greatly appreciate it. May the Lord Bless You!
–Haley Johnson, via internet

Ed – Please ask any of these retailers to carry HM: Lifeway, Family Christian, Hasting's, Barnes & Noble, Book People. Our distributor (Ingram, # below right) services those stores; and sometimes enough customers asking will prompt a store to carry it and/or increase their "draw." Thanks for caring.

HM

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SCRIPTURE "Remind the people... to be ready to do whatever is good, to slander no one, to be peacable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men ... when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, Whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life ... And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good." (Titus 3:1-8)

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HARDNEWS
Quick & concise

MAIN LINE RIDERS
CLIFFY HUNTINGTON ROCKS OUT

Cliffy Huntington, long known for his passionate love for all things Ramones, also has had a long-standing love affair with metal. Enter Main Line Riders, his new band (signed to Retroactive Records). It's a serious throwback to good-time rock and roll, 80s Sunset Strip style. The band's name has a serious take, which is elaborated on the album cover to *Shot In The Dark*: "The tree, city and people are all elements of the story," explains Cliffy. "The train's on a one-stop outta dodge, the industrialized mechanical manmade city is the best man can do by himself, two sets of people (those many on the left and the few on the right), which is the main line? The one with the tree, life or the beginning signs of it... represent the path few tread."

RIYL: AC/DC, Hanoi Rocks, Poison, Guns 'N Roses.

AARON GILLESPIE EXPANDS AGAIN
LAUNCHES CLOTHING LINE: PIG CLOTH

Aaron Gillespie and his wife, Jamie, have started a new clothing business of short-run shirts, etc, called Pig Cloth. Made with very fine, soft materials, the early designs thus far are cool and eye-catching ... with off-center printing and custom tags and labels. If it's like anything else the guy has touched recently, it'll blow up. With Underoath, The Almost and now Pig Cloth, we don't know how the guy gets any rest.

God bless 'em.

Facedown Records launch new imprint

After 10 successful years owning and operating the widely known metal/hardcore record label, Jason Dunn has set his sights on genres completely out of the realm of Facedown's jurisdiction. Dreamt Music will focus on a diverse assortment of rock bands, attuning to a much wider audience. Citing Facedown's staunch branding in the heavy-music field as one of his main priorities, Dunn explained the basis for the Dreamt Music platform: "It is very important that we keep heavy music associated with Facedown, so that fans know what they can expect when they see the logo on an album. Dreamt Music affords us the opportunity to allow Facedown's focus to remain specific to its genre while simultaneously giving us the freedom to explore more rock-oriented bands." The inaugural Dreamt Music release has strong ties to the Facedown Family. Thieves & Liars is a blues-rock outfit ala Pink Floyd that boasts founding member Corey Edelmann, formerly of Facedown's long-standing hardcore band No Innocent Victim.

News bullets

Norma Jean was without a singer one night, as **Cory Brandan** was sick, but the band didn't want to cancel this show in Mexico. In flies **The Chariot**'s **Josh Scogin** (whom everybody knows once used to front Norma Jean) to save the gig. This was Scogin's first time in Mexico, and it was really eye opening. "The kids in Mexico are crazy and really excited about the music, and they were so happy to see me performing with my old band. They broke the barricades down when we were performing to try and get to us. We were assigned bodyguards who kept things under control, which seemed pompous, but I have never seen kids come at a band that forcefully. There were even kids waiting for us in the airport when our plane arrived in Mexico City. We did twelve songs, only four of which I knew from when I was with Norma Jean, so I had to learn eight songs in a day and half. I was glued to my iPod for the whole time."

After a run on Warped Tour, and some festival dates including Purple Door, Icthus Fest, and Cornerstone, **The Chariot** hit its first CMJ Festival, playing one of the only heavy music showcases. Scogin also got to work on the second and third videos off The Fiancée, for the songs "The Drew Their Swords" and "Forgive Me Nashville."

Sleeping Giant has a new live video for "Patient Endurance."

If all goes as planned, **Seabird**'s debut album (*Till We See The Shore*) should be out by February.

Leeland's new album, *Opposite Way*, hits stores on February 26.

On the same day will be **Pillar**'s new one, *For the Love of the Game*. You can listen to it early (between Dec 15 and Jan 15) at hmmag.com/pillar

A portion of ticket proceeds from this fall's **Relient K/Switchfoot** tour went to support Habitat For Humanity. Relient K's song, "The Best Thing," was tapped for ABC's Fall Premiere week.

The Famine

BY NATHAN DOYLE

The Famine is a waltz in brutality. Conducted by Chris McCaddon, the original vocalist for the late Embodyment and one time Demon Hunter guitarist, he knows metal. Add in Embodyment bandmates Mark Garza on drums and guitarist Andy Godwin and The Famine has the perfect recipe for destruction.

McCaddon explains, "I knew I didn't want to work with just anyone. In my opinion, Andy and Mark are at the top of their game. In Embodyment, they had this chemistry and just worked well together; they compliment each other so well. We've also been friends for years, so working with them again just made sense. My time in Demon Hunter began as a musical outlet between friends without professional ambition. I think that is where the band succeeded. Fans recognized the honesty behind songs and embraced it. It definitely gave me a different perspective on my role as a musician. It's all about honesty with yourself and with the audience. I felt it was key to put those components together for The Famine."

At first glance The Famine may seem like Embodyment Version 2.0, but McCaddon is the first to correct fans, "From the beginning we knew Embodyment fans, particularly the fans of early Embodyment, would perceive this as some sort of 'resurrection' of the band. Embodyment ran its course and is over. It was never our intention to approach this as a reunion. We wanted to start from scratch, start something new. A fresh start."

And start fresh they have. Since signing with Solid State Records last year, the death metal triptych has been grinding away in the studio to release their first full-length album, "We just want to release the album, do a few tours and see what happens from there. I don't want to have expectations either way but just have fun with it and hope for the best. I'd love for it to be successful."

The Almost are currently on a great tour with **Paramore** and The Starting Line (see a review at the Editor's blog at hmmag.com). *Southern Weather* has been doing above and beyond what Underoath drummer Aaron Gillespie first imagined. It shot to the Billboard 200 at #29. The first single, "Say This Sooner," was a Top 10 hit at Alternative radio and the accompanying video, directed by Shane Drake (Panic At the Disco, Red Jumpsuit Apparatus), received massive play at MTV, MTV2, mtvU, Music Choice, The IMF and FUSE over the summer. He also filmed the follow-up video to the title track.

In a similar situation that happened to Norma Jean, **Underoath** had to tap The Almost drummer **Kenny Bozich** to take Gillespie's place behind the drumkit for several shows, as he had to undergo emergency surgery to treat an infection in his hand. They had to track down Bozich while he was hiking in the mountains of Utah. Bozich left the mountains with just enough time catch a flight to Las Vegas that landed 25-minutes before Underoath would take the stage that night. The band texted Bozich a set list and he listened to the songs nonstop on the flight. The group and Bozich had less than 5-minutes to talk before they took the stage, the band and Bozich managed to still play a strong 40-minute set. All the day-of-show action including the surgery on Gillespie's hand was captured by the video crew currently traveling with Underoath for a documentary and concert film on the band and their current headlining tour. Expect this live CD/DVD to hit shelves early next year. In case you were wondering, guitarist Tim McTague and lead vocalist Spencer Chamberlain took over Gillespie's "clean" vocals during his time out.

The Rider on the White Horse has decided to break up, searching out their own endeavors.

Red went on another tour leg this fall with Three Days Grace, Breaking Benjamin and Seether.

HARDNEWS
Page fourteen

A Dream Too Late

BY AMANDA CURTIS

Travel hundreds of light years away and you'll find A Dream Too Late, recent addition to Tooth & Nail. Along with their fresh perspective, ADTL brings variety and a distinguished sound the label has been longing for. A Dream Too Late makes it their mission to set high standards in all they do. Take their live show for example; the members make an effort to portray their appearance, by dressing in ties, dress shirts, and vests; in the same fashion they want their music to come across, "pretty, elegant, and moving."

"When you see us live or look at us as people on stage, you see something different, and I think that's class." Chris Eddie, guitar and vocals, humbly states. "I know it's weird to dub yourself classy, but it's something we strive for to set ourselves apart."

Chris further explained the band's musical philosophy, "We really try to get good sounds out of our amps and drums; it's not a lot of screaming and hard guitars." So, are they a Christian band? ADTL confesses they love God and give Him glory for everything, but don't solely confine themselves to only playing churches. "We're not a Christian band as far as where you'd find us in the music section at the store," Chris explains with a laugh, "But, yes, we are totally flaming Christians." The band describes their sound as "spacey and airy"; keeping to the theme of their album, *Intermission to the Moon*, recorded with Steve Wilson (Jonezetta).

"It's pretty easy to be passionate when you're screaming your guts out." Chris remarks. "We're excited to get people excited with the sounds of melodies, spacey guitars, and dreamy trance things."

Lyrically, their main source of inspiration stems from reflections of friend's and family's trials and errors, while continuing a theme of hope and perseverance as a solid foundation throughout.

"The biggest influence in my life is my brother. Not because he's done anything right, but because he's done everything wrong." Chris passionately explains. "We all have family and friends in our lives that have huge potential in their lives – lots of things going for them, and they just turn around and decide to not chase after it."

"We are so safe as people these days. We just tend to do routine things and follow other people's dreams – if they are even dreams. It's more like steps in what we think we're supposed to do, like college or working 9 to 5." Chris affirms, "We want to reiterate that you can follow your hopes and dreams and take a risk."

News bullets

Spoken's **Matt Baird** says of their new album: "We wanted to be able to experiment with heavier songs and think further ahead in the lifespan of the band; And with these heavier songs it really feels like a step toward the future and a reflection of the past."

Demon Hunter released 3 different versions of the *Storm The Gates Of Hell* record. The deluxe edition has a ton of extras and really cool packaging.

Dave Mustaine invited **Megadeth** fans to call his cell phone during their U.S. *Tour Of Duty*. At each tour date, Dave made an announcement from the stage, encouraging fans to call and leave him messages and tells them where his cell number is posted at the venue.

Family Stores are carrying an exclusive *The Flame in All of Us: Inspired Heart Edition* **TFK** album that includes the making of the album, tour features, plus exclusive 2 acoustic bonus songs and exclusive footage.

San Antonio, TX-based, pop/rock band, **Grey Holiday** released its debut album, *The Glorious Revolution*, in September.

VeggieTales: Christian Hit Music features Bob, Larry and their Veggie friends, along with special guests **Switchfoot**, **Relient K**, **Amy Grant**, **Audio Adrenaline** and **newsboys**, singing 15 of today's most-loved Christian hits. With chart-topping tracks like Relient K's "Sadie Hawkins Dance," Audio Adrenaline's "Big House," and newsboys' "Shine."

Our Heart's Hero will join **Stellar Kart**, **Nevertheless**, and **Eleventyseven** for this holiday season's 25-city *Punk The Halls Tour*.

Long Island, NY's **Edison Glass** played a few dates opening for **Blindside** in the U.S. in the fall. The band was stoked about supporting their heroes. "I couldn't be more excited to head out as main support for Blindside. "I am brushing up on my Swedish as we speak," laughs singer/guitarist **Joshua Silverberg**. "Seriously, we've all have

Manic Drive

BY MATT CONNER

Manic Drive's latest album, *Reset & Rewind*, is a blender mix of sorts, combining several musical genres into one set of tunes intended to have a bit of fun in every direction. A dash of funk, a pinch of hip-hop and a sprinkle of metal find their way into the base ingredient of radio-friendly rock, which is just the way the band likes it.

"We were definitely exploring different fields of music," says guitarist Michael Cavallo. "We were experimenting into more like pop or funk or hip-hop still mixed with hard rock. I think it's a lot more of a mature sounding record. As far as stylistically that's where it's going. It's been fun mixing in different elements of different styles of music that we also listen to. It's throwing that onto the record, but leaving the main component of rock."

Manic Drive first got their start as the more cheesily named One Cross, but in 2004, Michael and his brother Shawn, the band's principal songwriter, decided to shift directions and add a few members. Those arrived in the form of bassist Tyler Dolynsky and drummer Travis Blackmore.

However, it wasn't until the band decided to put on their own showcase during GMA Week in Nashville three years ago that the band truly made their mark. The right industry people happened to be in attendance and a record deal with Whiplash Records followed suit. Of course, it wasn't nearly as straightforward as it sounds.

"It's funny, because they weren't even invited for the showcase," laughs Cavallo. "They just happened to show up. But they absolutely loved the show and loved the sound and were like, 'Hey, we'd love to work with you guys.'"

The band continues to invite others into their musical world on their latest, collaborating with labelmate Jill Parr, rap artist M.O.C. and former dc Talk member Kevin Max, the last of which was a childhood dream for Cavallo.

"The guy who signed us to Whiplash knows Kevin very well and one day I just randomly said, 'Man, I'd love to work with Kevin.' I was a huge dc Talk fan back in the day and bought *Free At Last* back in the third grade, so I grew up listening to his voice. So I said, 'That'd be killer to have him on the record.' And he said, 'I think I can make that happen.'"

For Manic Drive, it seems the only people left to invite into the (literal) mix, then, are the rest of us.

been huge fans for a very long time. In fact, **Mountain** (co-lead singer/bass player) proudly wore a Blindside hoodie to high school almost everyday. He even bleached a Blindside logo into his black backpack. Touring with them will be very surreal. I can't wait."

Thrice, who's out on the road with me without You and Brand New, recently did a special online performance for JamNow.com

Anyone that saw **The Myriad** opening for the **David Crowder Band** on last fall's *Remedy Tour* is no doubt impressed ... and chomping at the bit for their full-length release next spring. They were selected out of a few thousand bands to be one of the top 6 MTV2 Mountain Dew "Dew Circuit Breakout" bands. MTV will come and shoot them on the road. The final 3 bands get to play in Times Square on New Years Eve and the top band gets automatically added to MTV and M2's rotation.

The band **One Star Story** is super stoked to say that **Stephen Christian** (**Anberlin**) has been working with the band and produced some of their new stuff.

The men, friends and family members of the Tooth and Nail band, **Showbread**, are headed to Ecuador January 20 to February 1, 2008 to work in the Casa de Fe Orphanage. With a mission to put more time in effort into serving people worldwide, especially in overlooked and underprivileged parts of the world, Showbread has launched a new home for information on their outlet for mission work world wide, Raw Rock Missions [rawrockmissions.blogspot.com]. The band is currently at work raising enough money to send the thirteen volunteers to Ecuador's orphanage. Paypal donations can be made through Showbread's website (showbread.net) to financially support this trip.

Indie Vision Music, has signed Charlotte, NC. band **My Epic**. The band will enter the studio in March to record its new full length with a planned late spring/early summer release.

HARDNEWS
Page sixteen

Enough Already!

BY JAMIE LEE RAKE

If you're unfamiliar with **ART REYNOLDS**, he wrote "Jesus Is Just Alright." Now that you recognize his DC Talk/Doobies/Byrds association, you may be enjoy his gospel'tronic-tinged adult r&b and retro-disco on *A Vintage Perspective* (Art Reynolds Music). Whether singing of divine or human love, Reynolds' husky baritone's a compelling focal point. Gifted and sincere as Reynolds is, however, next time outside producers could hone this legendary brother's game a bit sharper. (ArtReynoldsMusic.com)

My acquisition of vintage Jesus hippie CD re-issues sight-unheard has largely been a bankable crapshoot. *This Our Sacrifice Of Praise* (World Psychedelia/SungEun, South Korea) by early '70s co-ed Britons **11:59** continues the winning streak. Think Second Chapter of Acts jamming alongside Fairport Convention with The Free Movement producing, using mostly Psalms for largely ethereally reverent folk'adelica. Easily enjoyable as it may be difficult to find. But worth it.

Could a 3-CD set entitled *Dylan* (Columbia/Legacy) comprising 51 tracks over a career over 40 years long be about anyone other than BOB? Not hardly. Even if you have all the albums from which this collection was compiled, you might still appreciate the chronological programming of artistic highlights as you quibble over the relative biggies left off. Still, it's American folk rock defined and evolved in one convenient package (and his gospel period's represented decently).

Pops' tremulously haunting guitar. His steady tenor and heavenly alto by daughter Mavis. Her siblings' fervent harmonizing. Occasional unobtrusive drumming. If you guessed I'm going on about **THE STAPLE SINGERS**, you know your vintage soul gospel. Get to know their 1956-61 work better via *The Best Of The Vee-Jay Years* (Shout! Factory). Even beyond The Rolling Stones refashioning one their hits, the Staples rocked sacred their songs at intriguing angles.

Got digital cable! By this newfound ability to watch Christian music vids on a big screen without bugging publicists for DVD's, I (re)discovered **KATELYN TARVER**. The *American Idol Junior* finalist's *Wonderful Crazy* (TC Music) proffers discreetly godly, often dancey 'tween pop for those smarting over Jump5's demise and sometimes wanting to hear someone further through puberty than Pure NRG. Disney Channel and Gospel Music Channel's natural overlap. (KatelynTarverOnline.com)

You know what the rest of this magazine covers? Send me anything but that by Christ-following musical types that you think I'll enjoy to P.O. Box 29; Waupun, WI 53963 USA. And you'll read about it here in a couple of months. Cool? You know it!

News bullets

MxPx scored an endorsement deal with Sparrow Guitars.

A&M/Octone a releasing a special edition two-disc version of **Flyleaf**'s self-titled debut album, which has been certified Gold. All three of the band's videos will be on the bonus DVD.

Impending Doom just shot a video for "Silence The Oppressors." Their next tour will be with Too Pure To Die, White Chapel and Beneath The Sky.

ABC is using **Krystal Meyers**' song, "Make Some Noise" (from her upcoming new album), for its Sunday-Night Lineup promotion for *Desperate Housewives*, *Brothers and Sisters* and *Extreme Home Makeover*.

The new video from **The Devil Wears Prada** ("Hey John, What's Your Name Again?") is making its debut on MTV2's *Headbangers Ball*.

February 19th will be the release date for **Virgin Black**'s 2nd release in their new trilogy, *Requiem – Fortissimo*.

Fireflight's song, "Unbreakable," was used by NBC to promote *Bionic Woman*.

Andrew Schwab reports that **Project 86** "have a digital EP coming out on iTunes. It's called *The Kane Mutiny* EP. It has our first cover song ("Lucretia My Reflection" by The Sisters of Mercy), Two new tracks and two remixes from *...and The Rest Will Follow*.

The Burial just signed with Sancrosant Records.

U2 3D, filmed during the **U2**'s *Vertigo Tour* dates in South America last year, is the first live action movie ever shot, produced, and exhibited in digital 3-D. It's set to open worldwide in late January.

Inhale Exhale has been working with **Travis Wyrick** on their new album, scheduled for release late this spring.

Fono is making its new album, *Too Broken To Break,* available for free download on their website [fono.net]

LIVE REPORT

ACL Fest 2007

September 14-16

BY DOUG VAN PELT

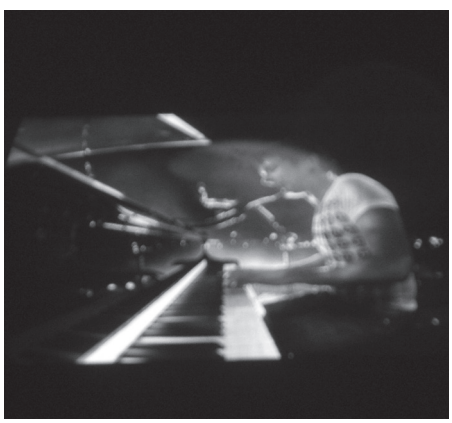
AUSTIN, TX – This year's grand scale 3-day mega festival started off with a White Stripes cancellation and then a fire. Some propane tank exploded, injuring a few people and sending huge flames up in the air. I saw the news report as I was headed to the grounds. The first word I heard from someone that reported it was "evacuating," so I thought, 'This is it. No fest today.' Fortunately, the fire was quickly contained and the show went on (after a porta-potty melted from the heat).

With upwards of 100,000 people and 130 bands to choose from, no artist had to perform crowdless. The highlights are diverse and too numerous to mention, but here's a shot.

Manchester Orchestra played a nice 4pm slot before Crowded House (who had arguably the best backdrop of the weekend – Muse's giant video screens don't count!). They delivered a coarse 45-minute set and then played some more that night at a Paste Magazine party.

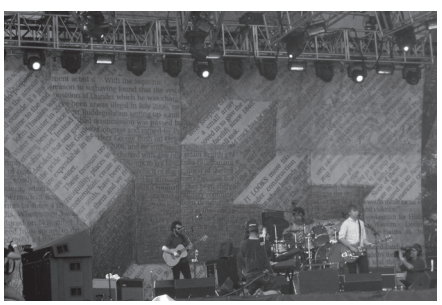
On the way to see Cold War Kids I was surprised by **Cary Ann Hearts & the Gun Street Girls**, who displayed all I love about the blues, with grit, passion, feel, attitude, and a nice big humming type sound bed beneath it all. **Cold War Kids** did not disappoint, with a very gracious stage banter. Lilting piano grooves set the tone and shaker sound rattles (or bashing them against a road case) added some nice accents. The song "Saint John" featured some creative percussion, with drum sticks striking that poor road case, which sported a cymbal stand on top; as well as dangling shells. They played one of their new songs ("Put Out The Fire?"), which starts quiet, simmering with light percussion as it moves into that familiar "feel good" type of piano song, but with oddly lamenting words: "You'll be worth more dead than alive ... poor, poor me." They finished with "Red Wine, Success" "Expensive Tastes" (described as "kind of a love song...") and "You Hang Me Up To Dry," which had a really cool swinging groove that could've easily fit onto Zeppelin's *In Through The Out Door* album.

The WaMu stage held plenty of legitimate Gospel music throughout the weekend. One of the legends of the genre rocked the house – **The Mighty Clouds Of Joy**. One minute they're rockin' the joint, and the next they'll slow things down with a soulful number with a couple vocalists scratchin' the atmosphere with those Motown-high vocals that send shivers down the spines of all those amateur singers of us that wish we could soar that high.



Checking out **Muse** felt like witnessing the future of music, with their intense visuals and hybrid of styles. I heard **Arcade Fire's** set was a "spiritual experience." They played at the same time as Muse.

Closing out the festival was a much-talked-about set by **Bob Dylan & His Band**. Ever since he freaked out that Newport Folk Festival crowd back in '65 with an electric rock band set, no one's ever been quite sure what to expect from the living legend. I'm sure he likes it that way. With a carnival barker's introduction that briefly referenced his conversion, the band strolled on stage and launched into his familiar ditty about martyrdom, "Everybody Must Get Stoned." By the second song, it was apparent that we were getting the "mumbling, slow and groggy-voiced" showman. By the third song he was on the piano. They picked up momentum later, strumming along like The Who during "Tangled Up In Blue," and pulling out older numbers, like "Working Man Blues," and "Hwy 61 Revisited." A brilliant, watershed performance or nostalgic romp? Neither, unfortunately.



Clockwise from top: The Mighty Clouds Of Joy; Fest entrance; Crowded House; Manchester Orchestra [Photo by David Mead]; and Muse's Matthew Bellamy [All other photos by DVP].

FAR-LESS

BY MATT CONNER

For vocalist Brandon Welch and the rest of the five members of Far-Less, you're better off simply forgetting their last album ever existed. In fact, they don't even acknowledge it in their live shows, refusing to play a single track from the disc. That's a rare move for a band without a large discography, but one that showcases exactly how they feel about their former metal-tinged sound.

It's not that *Everyone Is Out To Get Us* was a bad album necessarily, but it definitely wasn't "them", according to Welch. And now the band seems to be back on track with their sophomore effort, *A Toast to Bad Taste*.

"I think it sounds like we've grown up a lot," explains Welch from an unknown location via cell phone. (Welch later yelled and asked a bandmate who stated "New Orleans") "Because with the EP, I think there was a hint of a band that was really wanting to start writing good songs, but we kinda drifted from that with the full-length, because we were like, 'Hey man, I think we can write crazy riffs. And that's really cool.' [Laughs] But it seems that on this album, we're just saying, 'Hey, we just wanna be a band that writes good songs.'"

It's definitely a marked change, one that actually hearkens back to the band's initial Tooth & Nail EP, *Turn to the Bright*. The songs on *Toast* emphasize the melodic side of Far-Less that was missing on their last album.

"After we had all the songs written, we would sit down with an acoustic and I would write melodies, which helps a lot. It really, really makes for better melodies, I think. When you can hear the clarity of all the notes as opposed to all the distortion coming at you and things."

As to why that sound disappeared for a disc is question that not even Welch can answer.

"I don't even know how our last record really came about from the EP," admits Welch. "It just kinda happened. I moved away when the band started writing it, so I would come home just to write to the music they had written and it just so happens that our drummer at the time [Ray Felts] was just really into metal. He just wanted to wig out on his drum kit. [Laughs] And that's just how the last record came about."

With the sonic interruption of *Everyone* behind them, Far-Less is now more focused and mature than ever on *A Toast to Bad Taste*. Tracks like "Surprise Funeral (For The Charmed)" offer complexities and layers that are as impressive as anything they've done before. While others songs, such as "So Glad," offer a sensitive, personal side, exposing a band's heart that's often been covered over with noise. It's that song, in fact, that Welch notes is the first song he'd written on his own "in years."

"My girlfriend at the time had broken up with me and we were on the road and I was absolutely miserable, because I wanted to get home and make things work out, which didn't happen ultimately. But that song is one where I tried to be more traditional, Johnny Cash style, a song about somebody you love, but you're gonna have to kill them or something like that. [Laughs] I love Johnny Cash and I've always wanted to write a song like that. That's as close as I can come."

With a new sound and determination, things are looking up for Far-Less. And if nothing else, they're a band much more comfortable in their own skin.

far-less.net

Tell us how you really feel

2007 STAFF PICKS

LIKE YOU CARE WHAT WE THINK.

GREG TUCKER
COLUMNIST

Favorite Albums 2007:
Phil Wickham – *Cannons*
David Crowder – *Remedy*
Urban Rescue – *Reflection*
The Almost – *Southern Weather*
Hillsong United – *All of the Above*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Urban Rescue

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Maylene and the Sons of Disaster

MATT CONNER
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Over The Rhine – *The Trumpet Child*
Eisley – *Combinations*
Fauxliage – *S/T*
Deas Vail – *All the Houses Look the Same*
Jimmy Eat World – *Chase The Light*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Paper Route

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Mute Math

BRIAN QUINCY NEWCOMB
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Radiohead – *In Rainbows*
Bruce Springsteen – *Magic*
The Almost – *Southern Weather*
The Hives – *The Black and White Album*
Rickie Lee Jones – *The Sermon on...*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Quelle, the house band at Christ Church

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Over The Rhine

BRENTEN GILBERT
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Mr. J. Medeiros – *Of Gods and Girls*
The Rocket Summer – *Do You Feel*
The Almost – *Southern Weather*
Mike Farris – *Salvation in Lights*
Robbie Seay Band – *Give Yourself Away*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Listener

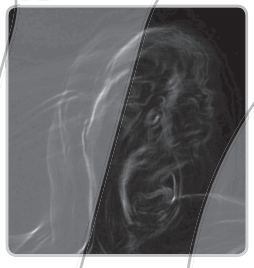
Favorite Live Show 2007:
David Crowder Band

DAN FRAZIER
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
De Novo Dahl – *Shout*
Mum – *Go Go Smear The Poison Ivy*
The Receiving End of Sirens – *The Earth...*
Red Cloud – *Hawthorne's Most Wanted*
Sea Wolf – *Leaves In The River*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Sleeptalker

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Atmosphere



TIM HALLILA
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Blindside – *The Black Rose EP*
Deas Vail – *All the Houses Look the Same*
August Burns Red – *Messengers*
Dustin Kensrue – *Please Come Home*
Thrice – *The Alchemy Index*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Nothing More

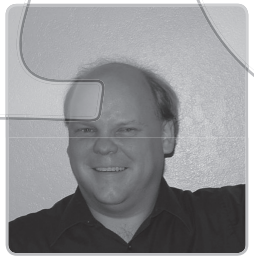
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Mute Math

DOUG VAN PELT
EDITOR

Favorite Albums 2007:
Anberlin – *Cities*
Paramore – *Riot*
The Almost – *Southern Weather*
Demon Hunter – *Storm the Gates of Hell*
Neon Horse – *S/T*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Sophia

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Paramore



JAMIE LEE RAKE
COLUMNIST

Favorite Albums 2007:
Aly & A.J. – *Insomniatic*
Liz McComb – *Soul, Peace and Love, V.1*
The Cross Movement – *History Out...*
Miley Cyrus – *Meet Miley Cyrus*
Christafari – *To The Foundations*

Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Bluegrace

Favorite Live Show 2007:
Mute Math

CHARLOTTA VAN PELT
OFFICE MANAGER

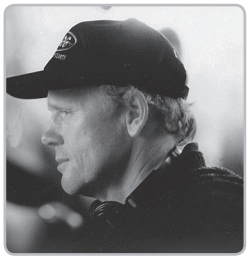
Favorite Albums 2007:
Family Force 5 – *Business Up Front...*
Emery – *I'm Only A Man*
Anberlin – *Cities*
David Crowder Band – *Remedy*
Switchfoot – *Oh! Gravity*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Favorite Live Show 2007:
David Crowder Band

KEMPER CRABB
COLUMNIST

Favorite Albums 2007:
Robert Plant & Alison Krauss – *Raising...*
David Crowder Band – *Remedy*
Robbie Seay Band – *Give Yourself Away*
Caedmon's Call – *Overdressed*
Derek Webb – *The Ringing Bell*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Tara Leigh Cobble
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Nickel Creek

ERIN LEE
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Favorite Albums 2007:
Lovedrug – *Everything Starts Where ...*
Black Rebel Motorcycle Club – *Baby 81*
Edison Glass – *Let Go* EP
Feist – *The Reminder*
Jimmy Eat World – *Chase This Light*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Bradley Hathaway
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Bloodgood



DAN MACINTOSH
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Arcade Fire – *Neon Bible*
Cold War Kids – *Robbers & Cowards*
The White Stripes – *Icky Thump*
Until June – *S/T*
Lost Dogs – *The Lost Cabin and the...*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Rue Royale
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Drive-By Truckers

CHAD OLSON
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
Neon Horse – *S/T*
Project 86 – *Rival Factions*
The Accident Experiment – *United W*
Skillet – *Comatose*
Chevelle – *Vena Sera*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Crunchy
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Gargamel!

CHRIS WIGHAMAN
COLUMNIST

Favorite Albums 2007:
David Crowder Band – *Remedy*
Demon Hunter – *Storm the Gates of Hell*
Mute Math – *S/T*
Mae – *Singularity*
Deas Vail – *All the Houses Look the Same*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Family Force 5

ANDREW SCHWAB
CELEBRITY WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
The Glorious Unseen – *The Stars Speak*
Dustin Kensrue – *Please Come Home*
Ken Andrews – *Secrets of the Lost Sat...*
Chasing Victory – *Fiends*
Neon Horse – *S/T*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
The Tide
Favorite Live Show 2007:
Children 18:3

DAVID STAGG
SENIOR WRITER

Favorite Albums 2007:
August Burns Red – *Messengers*
August Burns Red – *Messengers* :)
The Killers – *Sam's Town*
Kanye West – *Graduation*
V/A – *Soundtrack to the Motion Picture 300*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
The Daylight Hours
Favorite Live Show 2007:
August Burns Red

JOSH NIEMYJSKI
COLUMNIST

Favorite Albums 2007:
Beat Rabbi & Deepspace5 – *Deepspace...*
Ohmega Watts – *Watts Happening*
Scribbling Idiots – *The Have Nots*
Sev Statik & Dust – *Back to Dust*
Theory Hazit – *Extra Credit*
Favorite Unsigned Band 2007:
Origen aka Will Stanton
Favorite Live Show 2007:
KJ-52, Pigeon John, Scribbling Idiots

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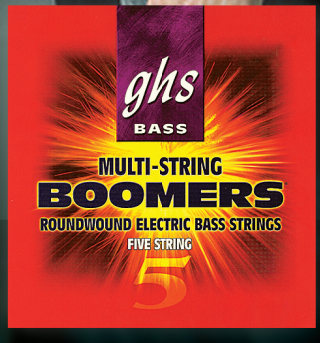
Ben Kasica

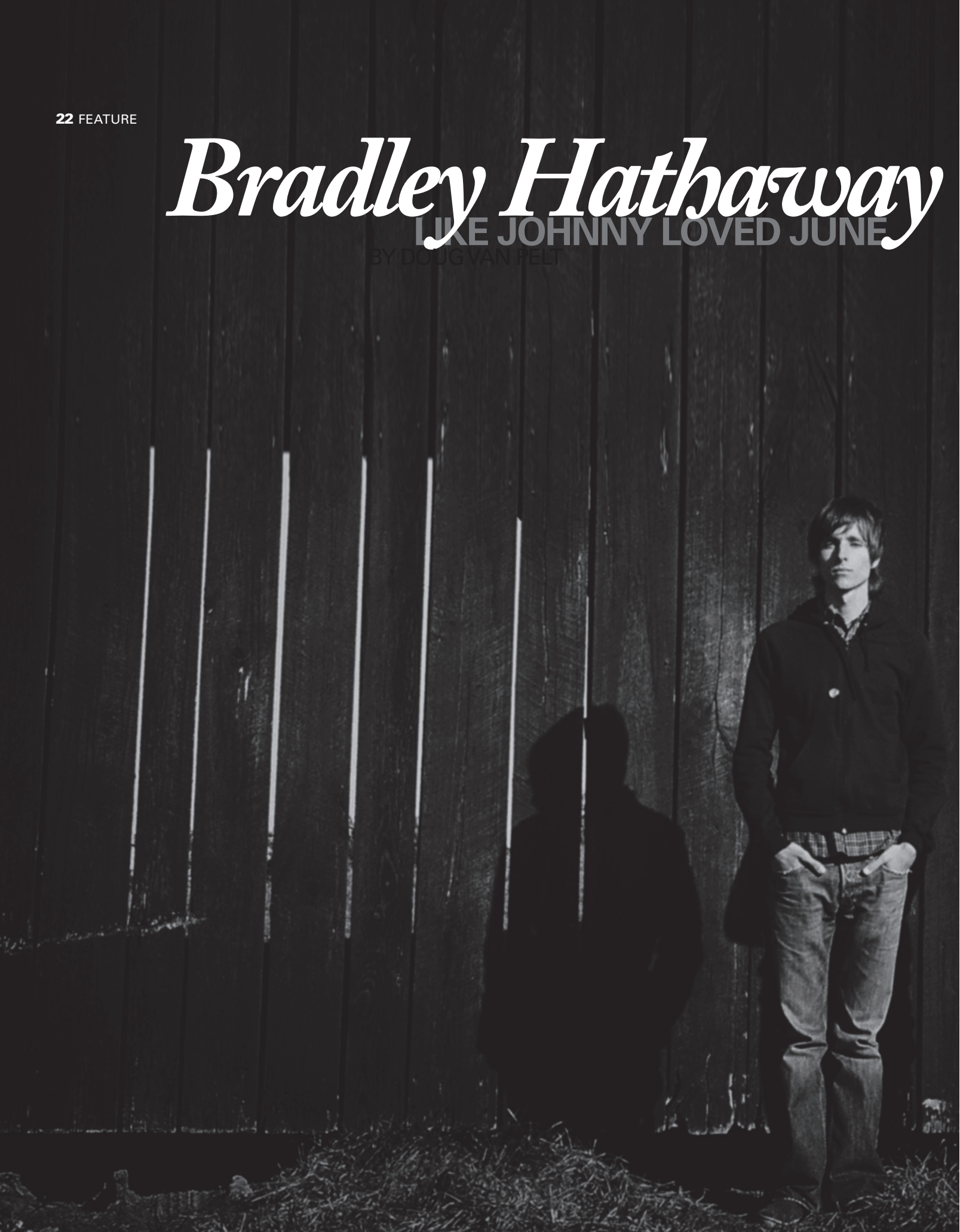


design by bobgraves@lartmagazin.com

Bradley Hathaway

LIKE JOHNNY LOVED JUNE

BY DOUG VAN PELT



2004 IS THE YEAR I FELL IN LOVE WITH BRADLEY HATHAWAY. NO, NOT IN ONE OF THOSE "ADAM AND STEVE" KIND OF WAYS, BUT AS A APPRECIATOR OF GREAT ART. 2005 WAS GREAT, BUT IT WAS PART ENERGY/EXCITEMENT HEARING THE CROWD DROWN HIM OUT RECITING HIS POETRY WHILE HE JUST HELD THE MIC AND PART DISAPPOINTED THAT I WASN'T HEARING THE MASTER THROW DOWN HIS WORDS ALL BY HIMSELF. SOMETHING WILL HAVE TO CHANGE. NEW POEMS, MAYBE…? 2006 WAS WHEN I SAW HIM PERFORM WITH SOME MUSICIANS AT CORNERSTONE AND (GASP) SING A FEW SONGS. "THAT'S COOL, DUDE," I'D TELL HIM AFTER SAID PERFORMANCE, USING THAT OH-SO SUBTLE TONE THAT COULD JUST AS WELL HAVE BEEN USED TO SAY, "IF YOU WANT TO SHAVE YOUR HEAD AND LIVE IN A CAVE IN UTAH SO YOU CAN READ THE BIBLE ALL DAY, THAT'S COOL." LITTLE DID I KNOW WHAT WAS IN STORE FOR THE NEXT YEAR… 2007 HAS SEEN HIS NEW VISION TAKE SHAPE WITH A LEGITIMATE ALBUM – INSTRUMENTS AND SINGING AND THE WHOLE NINE YARDS. WHILE CLEARLY MY IMPRESSIONS OF HIS ART ARE GOING DOWN AND DOWN EACH YEAR, WILL THE TRANSFORMATION FROM BEAT POET TO SINGER WORK FOR ME … OR WILL I GIVE HIM ONE OF THOSE BRIEF, "COOL, DUDE," RESPONSES THE NEXT TIME WE TALK?

Fortunately, the whole thing works, and works well. The brilliant release, *The Thing That Poets Write About, The Thing That Singers Sing About* is quite possibly a masterpiece in every sense of the word. This double disc is packaged in like a book, with 80 pages of notes, pictures, conversations, and, of course, lyrics. The song "Like Socrates Loved The Truth" is so beautiful in its expression of love that it might "live" many years longer than the two-week attention/life-span of the vast majority of today's music. What makes the album truly great, though, is it doesn't just build you up to track #3 and then drop off from there. The rest of the tracks are sweet experiences of sound, sans a poignant yet 27-minute conversation/interview with a loving and honest married couple that might become an exercise in skipping after one good listen.

This topic of love has become a trademark for Hathaway of sorts. It serves the notion that there are two artists in the world that will have their careers ruined by relationship success: Chris Carrabba and Sir Bradley. "I've always made jokes that when I do get married I won't tell anyone because it will hurt merch sales," laughs Bradley. "But actually, when I have had a girlfriend on the road the girls that do say something are usually pretty stoked for both her and I. There hasn't been any of that weird competition stuff that girls sometimes do, so that makes me happy. And I hope that when I am married, if I ever do marry, that everyone could celebrate with us. And then I can write about being married and stuff…right now it's just the longing for that intimacy, that ideal that the whole new record is about really."

Perhaps less like Dashboard Confessional lyrics and more like a Christian teen seminar, however, his slant on relationships sounds tempered with wisdom over whimsical. "I do think of love long-term," he admits, "unlike so many people dating just to be dating. I'm just as lonely as the next person but I'm not entering into romantic relationships just because, ya know?"

I couldn't resist asking the guy for some universal "girl advice," but he confessed to not having any secrets, being just as mesmerized by the inability that even women have to understand themselves. "I feel like guys need to be treating girls like women more, or ladies. Like I've been a bit more receptive lately to how older folks are treating their ladies and it's itty bitty things like I saw today on the airplane. There was an older couple next to me. The wife had the window seat and the man the aisle. He got out of his seat, backed up, and let her go first. I know I don't do stuff like that enough to any girl, not just a girlfriend. But it's that old school respect that I think is missing from us guys that needs to be restored – across the board, too – for the big ones, small ones, super pretty ones, normal ones, ya know, just girls in general."

With an album title that perfectly describes his transition **from poet to singer**, it still helps to hear the "why" direct from the horses mouth. Why start singing when you're so good at talking? Judging by his answer, it sounds like he didn't have much of a choice. "Basically one day I wrote what came to be the first song on the new record. I just wrote the words, but they came out with more melody than usual and I knew it was to be sung the way it came out. I actually never spoke it at all, just came out singin' it, and from that point on nearly everything I was writing came out a singing melody. So, I found some dudes to play with, and bam, here we are. Now I play guitar and write songs, but I still write poems every now and again, they are just fewer and far between … but at shows I still rock 'em."

So, the Bradley Hathaway concert/performance will still be one heck of an enjoyable time, but things have indeed changed over time. I find myself wishing I could hear him and him alone reciting his poems with all the vigor and emotion of the recorded gems. But that ain't gonna happen. ...And I'd probably be upset by all this, if he hadn't done such a bang up great job at this new music gig.

"**I remember the first time** someone said one of my poems," he recalls after being forced to walk down memory lane. "It wasn't singing along like they came to do a bit later, but I just forgot one of the lines and someone filled it in for me. I was stoked. I went home feeling like a champ. And then it turned into (a) shout fest, like I was a hardcore band or something," he laughs. "It ruled. It still amazes me nearly each night that so many kids sing along to poetry. Over time it just became really fun and came to be something less special and more expected, to be honest. It still humbles me when I show up to places and so many kids now it, but that *feeling* of the first few times is over. But now when I hear kids singing 'So Do I Love You' or 'I Got Pain' or any other new song, I get stoked all over again. Because what I'm doing is so different now it gives me hope that kids are and will continue to respond to whatever I'm doing at the time."

Keep doing it with excellence, Bradley, and they will.

✖

inked in b

DIFFERENT TYPES OF FUEL

BY DAVID STAGG

THERE ARE TWO THINGS THAT STAND OUT TO ME ABOUT INKED IN BLOOD, BOTH OF WHICH ARE NOT RELATED TO MUSIC:
1) THEY WROTE THEIR ENTIRE RECORD WHILE HOPPED UP ON KRONIK ENERGY DRINK;
2) THEY TOUR THE COUNTRY IN A BUS THAT RUNS ON VEGGIE FUEL.

This is not to say that their music isn't important. It should be explicitly stated that Inked In Blood is heavily invested in their music, and they want you to know that. But since I love energy drinks, I want you to know that they, too, share a passion for caffeine. Their guitarist Kelly Mullinix got them hooked on one called Kronik. I've never tried this particular brand, but they've inspired me to order it and give it a shot.

I was also very intrigued to hear that their tour bus (which is actually an old Greyhound bus they gutted and re-built) runs off of vegetable oil. I've only heard about this kind of thing briefly, but it seemed like powering an entire tour on the grease run-off from food was a little risky. Talking to vocalist Joey Trump, he helped shed a little light on the risks. "There is always routine maintenance," he explains. "We always seem to be looking for a part that's getting old, special ordering it, shipping that part. It did take a couple months to work the bugs out, and you still have to keep a close eye on things." An interesting tidbit he shares with me: If you're looking to run your own car on vegetable oil, Asian food restaurants tend to provide the cleanest fuel. I tell him I had no idea and that I guess McDonald's is out of the question. He laughs and says, "That's right. I guess if your car can't run on it, you probably shouldn't be eating it."

By the time you read this, IIB's second full-length album will be in stores, and it's entirely possible you've already heard it. They're currently on tour, and hopefully their veggie bus has gotten them where they need to go. They're touring to support *Sometimes We Are Beautiful*, the record to follow *Lay Waste the Poets* the band put out roughly two years ago. A lot happened within those years between releases—probably more than Trump expected—but it's kind of hard to read Trump's reaction to whether or not he's glad the band went through it. (Think member changes.) Most bands, given what IIB went through, would have thrown in the towel; why didn't he?

"(Guitarist and co-founding member) Matt (McDonald) and I really wanted to start doing this on our own terms," Trump says. (Technically, Trump was the second singer in the band, but unless you were a part of the Seattle hard-core scene around eight years ago, chances are Trump is the only singer you've ever known.) He continues: "We put so much work and time and energy and effort into this, we didn't feel like we were done yet. We were never really worried that we were going to stop before we were good and ready, but the game from then on was figuring out who we really wanted to do this with. It's been going really, really well with the new guys."

He's referring to Mullinix and bassist Steven Gosvener, a couple of guys who were once Inked In Blood's roadies now brought on to be in the band full-time. Trump blames the former members' exits on touring. "It was a whole new ball game," he says. "Our lead guitar player got married and didn't want to tour. For a while we played with fill-ins. People cycled through our band—they thought they wanted to be in a touring band and you really get to know people when you're out there with them for a long time." Their current line-up, which includes former Society's Finest drummer Stephen Poole along with Trump, Mullinix, Gosvener, and McDonald, has been around for about a year now, about halfway between the releases of their two records.

Even with the member changes, Trump tells me that former guitarist Blake Hooper was still a major influence on the latest record, that he was very inspiring to their fans, and it was important to the Portland-based band keep his influence on "Sometimes We Are Beautiful". "We actually collaborated with him on the new record," Trump says. "When we first started writing, it sounded like us … but it felt kind of funny. So Blake would come by every other week and we'd jam with him. He was able to help us produce it so that it sounded authentic, like Inked In Blood music, but was still progressing in the direction we wanted to go."

That direction was apparently best summed up with the word "progressive." In almost every press release and bio for the band, that word is used to describe where they were heading with this record. And just the same, almost every band that puts out a new record wants to "progress" with their music—but it obviously means different things to different people. "We didn't come to the table saying, 'Let's write a metalcore record,'" Trump explains. "We listen to a wide variety of music and we wanted it to be Inked In Blood, but we really didn't bind ourselves as much as we did on our last EP."

The band still gets on a lot of shows with metalcore and hardcore bands, but Trump is hesitant to qualify his band's music as such. The new record is more melodic, and he's definitely noticed a distinct response from fans when they hear the new stuff. "When it's not 'two-step breakdown two-step breakdown pile up,'" Trump says, "they actually stand back and with their mouths open like, 'What is going on?' He has a point. There have been a number of bands, formerly of metalcore or hardcore fame, that have "progressed" to a more melodic sound with a terrible response from their fans, demanding the former band back. Trump maintains this hasn't happened to Inked In Blood, at least not yet: "In general we've gotten a really good response from the kids we've played for since we've started writing new stuff."

No matter who likes it, no matter who comes to their shows, Inked In Blood—like most bands—are seeking to put out music they like, music with a purpose. Trump is very explicit when it comes to this. The artwork, the music, the lyrics, the symbolism… all of it, he says, have specific intent. "(It is) layers upon layers of poetry that goes into making the record," he says, "and it all interweaves with itself. If a kid's going to listen to the record with an open mind and sit there with the book and look at the artwork while they're listening to it, I think that's the best conduit for figuring out what we're trying to do.

"We did everything for a reason," Trump says, finishing up his summary of their new album. "That's the kind of band that I think we are. We're not just throwing stuff out there; we want kids to think about our music and feel with us what we're feeling in our songs. Music isn't a product; it's an extension of us."

✖

"We didn't come to the table saying, 'Let's write a metalcore record. We listen to a wide variety of music and we wanted it to be Inked In Blood, but we really didn't bind ourselves as much as we did on our last EP."

Calvary

A Plea For Purging

ACCIDENTAL RESULTS

BY BEAR FRAZER

THE AUTUMN WEATHER HAS BEEN CRUEL TO A PLEA FOR PURGING. AS THE HARDCORE QUINTET DRIVES THROUGH NEVADA ON THIS DARK AFTERNOON, THEIR VAN IS BOMBARDED WITH A MIXTURE OF HAIL, RAIN AND SNOW. TO MAKE THE SITUATION MORE STRENUOUS, THE CHRISTIAN METAL ENTHUSIASTS ARE SLATED TO PERFORM IN RENO WITHIN A MATTER OF HOURS.

Although the weather conditions are terrible, it doesn't affect Andrew Atkins. Instead of staring at the window in a state of pandemonium, the robust vocalist sits calmly in the backseat and closes his eyes. The 26 year-old may as well take a catnap now, because once his group arrives at the venue, they will utilize all of their energy as they perform a slew of uplifting compositions from their full-length debut, *A Critique of Mind and Thought*.

"It's a whole look on why we as humans are created and what we are to do with our lives," the bearded singer explains. "Our whole existence on Earth is to praise God. It just fascinates us that God puts so much work into us, like our makeup, our body, our mind and our soul. We're being creative to praise Him."

At first, however, Atkins needed a wake-up call. When A Plea For Purging (then comprised of bassist John Wand, drummer Aaron Eckermann, and guitarists Blake Martin and Lyle Paschal) re-invented themselves as a heavy musical outfit in October 2005, Atkins was offered the singer's slot, but declined the invitation. He recently purchased a Scion Xb and took a computer job to pay back his car loan.

Six months later, the tables were turned. Atkins wrecked his vehicle in a three-car pileup, but thankfully, his insurance company paid it off. Since A Plea For Purging was seeking a new frontman, the burly vocalist quit his job and joined the band by Spring. "I got freed up, debt-wise, and it seemed like everything fell into place," he explains. "Nobody got hurt and it all worked out, because if I still had a 300 dollar a month car payment, I wouldn't be with the band."

Over the next few months, the Nashville-bred collective strengthened their prowess in Tennessee before recording their self-financed EP, *Quick Is The Word; Steady Is The Action*, in late 2006. While exploring avenues for distribution, they noticed Facedown Records had an online store consisting of non-exclusive independent records. When Atkins inquired about a partnership, CEO Jason Dunn informed the metal assembly that the company was ending that portion of the site.

However, Dunn was interested in working with A Plea For Purging and after listening to their heavy pedigree, he offered them a deal. It was an idealistic situation. "We felt like Facedown was a good home for us, because it seemed like they care about the kids and the ministry more than the money and the dollar signs," Atkins says. "And that's the number one thing that's most important to us."

That led to their cunning full-length debut, *A Critique of Mind and Thought*. Over a strong threshold of dynamic guitar riffs, heavy bass lines and pulsating drumbeats, Atkins spews deafening screams pertaining to inspirational life experiences and religious beliefs. The stimulating combination shines throughout the album, especially on noteworthy efforts, "While The Sparrow Sleeps" and "A Hymn Of Praise."

Before the crowd in Reno can witness their terrific metalcorish musicianship and fire-breathing stage exploits, A Plea For Purging has to overcome the poor weather conditions. As the hardcore quintet continues rolling on the highway, the cell phone rings and snaps Atkins out of his daze. The husky vocalist answers and looks out the window. "We're still driving," he says. "But the storm has settled down."

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TIMEOUT ... FOR SOME FACE SLAPPING

BY CAREY WOMACK

ROB BECKLEY, VOCALIST FOR PILLAR, CONFESSES THAT HIS NFL ALLEGIANCE LIES WITH THE KANSAS CITY CHIEFS, BUT HE ADMITS NOT EVERYBODY IN THE BAND IS A SPORTS NUT. "FOR US IT'S NOT NECESSARILY SPORT ORIENTED," SAYS BECKLEY OF THE LEAD OFF TITLE TRACK FOR THEIR UPCOMING ALBUM, *FOR THE LOVE OF THE GAME*.

Perhaps, but here is a band that early in its career was sometimes seen as a wannabe, a sort of arena league version of the big-league franchises of rock. They've had their Cinderella season, and perhaps some hard music listeners have moved on past Pillar, looking for the expansion teams of the nu-metal, screamo, posthardcore, neo-Southern, or black metal varieties. One listen to *For the Love of the Game*, together with a conversation with Rob Beckley, makes a couple of things evident to any fist-pumping analyst: Pillar's got game, and they're playing to win.

Quizzed about Pillar's current level of commitment, Beckley explains, "We've been doing this now for ten years … It gives my own accountability for me to say, 'You know what … I get to play rock and roll for a living, and I get to change people's lives through music.' There's not a whole lot of other things in the world that are as cool sounding as that to me." He and his bandmates' love and appreciation for what they do are the most obvious application of the title's metaphor. "'*For the Love of the Game*' is our love and passion for what we do."

It's one thing to love playing basketball, but quite another to excel at it. Rob has testified that Pillar loves the rock game, but can they still bring it? He seems to think so. Asked for musical high points on the record, he replied, "Hard to say, man… I don't think that there's necessarily a high point on the record. I think that the high point is, I never would've guessed that after doing this for ten years, and our fifth national release, that it would be the best record."

And you know what? He might be right! *For the Love of the Game* comes out rocking fast, the Wyrick production evoking Disciple. The second tune, "Turn It Up," has a P.O.D. vibe built on Kalel's killer bass line, incorporating the album and song titles of many faith-fueled bands in a meaningful and cool way for the verses, before bursting into yet another catchy gang vocal. Responding to an observation that the album seems particularly geared to big participatory choruses, crowd pleasing hooks, and live performances, even more so than in the past, Pillar's lead responds, "It's definitely one of those things we pushed to the limit … I told our producer, I said, 'I want eighties gang vocals. I want to bring it back, man. I want to hear big arena rock on this record.' He nailed it."

Good players, and even good songs are well and good, but the sports fan knows that it's not always the team with the best players that emerges victorious as champions. Oftentimes, it is the team with the best game plan, a carefully plotted strategy based on their team's capabilities matched against those of their opponent, a map, if you will, that will lead the team to victory.

"It's funny that you even bring it up, because honestly, I think that's something we've really struggled with, maybe as a band," says Beckley, admitting that in the past their gameplan was not a strong point. "I don't think we ever really had a clear vision of what we really wanted until recently. And I think that a lot of the reason that this record became so effortless and fun was, we had that vision … to be encouragers to the church, to write songs for the kid who's getting ready to go to college, that needs something to encourage them in their faith to stay strong. Is it a Christian band or are we Christians in a band? It's like, to me, it's not even a debate anymore. You can't be one without the other." Expressing confidence in where God is leading Pillar these days, Beckley enthuses, "My vision for this record I think is more clear than any record I've ever been a part of, and that's to go and make an impact on the church."

He speaks passionately about ministries like XXXChurch.com and a young-person led Invisible Children's Campaign. He impresses with his deep sense of responsibility for his family, mentioning only the needs of Pillar's supportive families when asked for prayer requests. He reveals a heart burdened by contention within the church. He speaks of the life-changing effects he experienced on reading Rob Bell's *Velvet Elvis*.

Rob speaks of the importance of being active in church, offering this litmus test: "It's like, if you're not willing to give up an hour or two on Sunday, then you're not going to ever get anything out of it. It comes down to, what's your commitment level?" He speaks of the men's group he started at his church who hold him accountable. "They're like, 'When's the last time you read your Bible,'" and after hearing Rob's excuses, saying, "'You're trying to tell me you didn't go to the bathroom, that you don't take your Bible in the bathroom? ... you didn't have time on a flight … to take twenty minutes to just read?'"

Beckley says, "Just like an athlete preps himself, through discipline, of diet, of working out, to keep their bodies in shape, of constantly watching game films, or bettering themselves – their mind, their knowledge – and then they go out and perform. We have to perform every day … Ours is a daily game; we're facing daily battles that are real spiritual-realm battles that we choose, as followers of Christ, to engage in that competition, basically. And the beauty is, it's like playing for an undefeated team."

Nevertheless, he acknowledges that the Christian can find himself in trouble, on the verge of defeat, likening it to a basketball coach calling a timeout and gathering them at the bench to say, "'You guys need to get your head in the game. You're better than this.' Sometimes that's what it takes. It takes a friend, or a pastor, or a loved one, a spouse – sometimes it's just you and God – somebody to come up to you, call the timeout in your life, smack you in the face, and say, 'Hey, you need to wake up. You're not performing the way you need to perform.'" Referencing sports, he says, "That is their passion, and we as believers should have the same passion for pursuing Christ. And that is the reason we went with the name, *For the Love of the Game*," drawn from Philippians 3:14, "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Pillar does indeed have game, but they take it dead serious. "I'm pretty pumped right now, … We're not calling the relationship with Christ a game, in terms of being toyed with. But it's a spiritual competition, the metaphor of winning or losing. There's no in-between ground. *For the Love of the Game*" he says, "equals the passion to pursue Christ."

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Ray Mazzola is most recognizable as the husky vocalist of **Full Blown Chaos**, but when he isn't touring around the country or dining on some fine cuisine, the 32 year-old is fulfilling his lifelong commitment as an ordained minister.

BY BEAR FRAZER

After the tragedy of September 11th, the Long Island native was determined to help those who were suffering from the catastrophic event. In the months to follow, Mazzola registered online with the Universal Life Church to become a licensed minister. For the past six years, the hardcore dynamo has counseled many individuals in their time of need. With Full Blown Chaos' third album, *Heavy Lies The Crown,* on the rise, Mazzola continues preaching the good word.

Ray, you have influenced so many people with your brand of heartfelt, hardcore music. Why decide to become a certified minister?

When 9/11 happened, I had a lot of friends who were cops and firefighters. I was bringing them coffee, donuts, and food all the time, and just by hearing their story, I wanted to help them. Just hearing people first-hand, who were in the debris and finding body parts, they needed somebody to talk to. They had flyers up looking for social workers and kids were afraid to go to school or walk out of their house. They needed to vent and somebody to trust who is basically not

going to take advantage or manipulate them in a vulnerable state.

So whom do you primarily counsel?
The majority of the people I talked to were friends. A lot of this, too, is sensitivity training; like how you word things and pull out the negativity. I did help out a bunch of children who were afraid, that did have families in the tragedy, and I helped them understand it wasn't their fault. A lot of times, they thought they were the ones to blame and they didn't know if it was going to happen again. They were terrified. When you're very young, you have to pull the topic away from politics and pull the topic away from war, because kids are afraid of that. When I was a kid, I would have nightmares about that stuff and being that it happened, it's the waking nightmare of everything that has come to pass.

Does being in a hardcore band make it easier for kids to talk to you?
It definitely does. With being hardcore and metal, you're opening yourself up. We're in the right place to be approached by people who are in need. My band isn't a Christian band by any means, but that doesn't take away from my own personal beliefs. I don't preach to people and I don't put any pressure on anybody. But if people wanna talk or need help, I'm always available for anyone.

With the grueling schedule of Full Blown Chaos, do you still counsel others?
Oh, I definitely do. There are tons of people who hit me up online. They all have my email, my phone number and they can go to our MySpace page (myspace.com/fullblownchaos).

If someone needs to get in touch with me or talk to me about anything, then here's my number. I'll let you know when I have some time and if I have time right there, then let's talk. I have plenty of troops and people who are overseas who talk to me on a regular basis. They hit me on email just to vent and basically strengthen what they're doing there. They need a re-assurance, and that's what a lot of it is: to know they are doing the right thing, that they are doing their job and they are keeping people safe by doing their job.

✖

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PILLAR

OHMEGA WATTS
WITH NO DELAY

BY BRENTEN GILBERT

"[MUSIC]

EVOKES EMOTION AND CAN CHANGE THE ATMOSPHERE DRAMATICALLY."

Citing the thematic complement of a movie score to film, Milton Campbell believes that music is one of the most effective means of communicating the ideas and emotions that define our lives. As Ohmega Watts, Campbell – an emcee, producer, and beatsmith – offers thought-provoking lyrics calling for social action as well as a diverse soundtrack that injects rhythm into the lives of all who listen.

His latest album, *Watts Happening*, includes a song called "Eyes and Ears" that describes the process of seeing the world around us, hearing the lyrics and then taking action. "[Music] can make you move." states Watts. "With the words, it makes you think." With a number of potent instrumental tracks and several verses that encourage listeners to do something about the problems in the world, his second album manages to inspire both motion and thought.

Born in Brooklyn during the popularity boom of hip-hop music, Watts himself is no stranger to the influence of music. "At a young age, I got sucked into hip-hop," says Watts, noting that he was about eleven at the time. "I was more about listening to and hearing the beats, but I loved the emceeing as well," he continues. "I loved the cleverness of peoples' rhymes."

By the time his parents, originally from Jamaica, moved the family to Florida, hip-hop and music were already firmly rooted in Campbell's soul. "I started emceeing around [the age of] fourteen," Watts recalls. Rapping may have been his first form of hip-hop expression, but making beats would perhaps prove to be even more rewarding.

"I always wanted to make music, so I got into making beats and whatnot after I got out of high school," says Watts. "I've been making beats ever since and growing into the role of producer, learning how to formulate a track, working with musicians and different things." His efforts and skills have allowed him to work with artists such as Mars III, Paul Wright and Mr. J Medeiros while becoming a well-respected producer.

Far from a one-dimensional producer though, Watts lists a wide variety of styles among his influences. "I pretty much run the gamut of sound," he remarks with a chuckle. It's this diversity that allowed him to move forward musically and explore more styles on the new album. "[*Watts Happening*] shows a lot more of my influences and the things that I'm into musically," explains Watts.

One example is the song, "Adapticao" (adaptation), which features the vocals of Tita Lima, one of Brazil's rising pop stars. After being asked to remix one of her songs, Watts was so taken by her voice that he asked to have her as a guest on his album. "I have a big affinity and love for Brazilian music," says Watts. "I like the styles and rhythms, the sounds and sambas, the overall way that the music is created, the feel to it and the movement," he continues, excited that the album has a more international flavor to it.

Watts was also able to work with Sugar Pie DeSanto, a well-known soul and blues singer from the Bay Area whose credits include touring with the late James Brown. "We did a song called 'Are You Satisfied' that I wrote for her," explains Watts. "In a way, it covers her story about losing her husband in a fire last year." The song backs DeSanto's ever-impressive vocals with a soulful sound and a hip-hop twist while asking listeners if they can be satisfied with their place in life. Also thematically prevalent on the album is the notion of social responsibility. Watts describes one song in particular – appropriately titled "No Delay" – as a "call to action for doing things with no delay." Watts wrote and performed two verses on the track, while featuring a friend and fellow producer named Surreal on the third. "The first verse was inspired by a film called *Born into Brothels,* which is about a woman who goes to Calcutta, into the red-light district of India," explains Watts. "The other verse I did kind of covered another film called *The Boys of Baraka*, which is about these boys from Baltimore who go to Africa."

Both movies tell how knowledge of the depravity that exists globally and the willingness to help make a difference can greatly impact the world around us. Offering a broader perspective than many are willing to consider, Watts opens the eyes of listeners with his call to action. "[For] people in America and some other places, just having a lack of money or having something small go wrong, [they think] it's the end of the world," states Watts. "You're not even getting close to what the end of the world could look like."

Watts also emphasizes the importance of living a life marked by love for others as evidenced in the song "Model Citizen" and he closes the album with "Gone With the Wind" a song that underscores the need for present action. The fervor of his delivery makes it clear that hits close to home.

"[*Watts Happening*] is, of course, a play on words for, 'Hey, what's happening,' but there's [also] a lot more personal things in it," explains Watts. "The title is also kind of saying that this is me growing. This is *Watts Happening* right now, and [it's] taking place right before you."

✖

BEATS

[hip-hop news 'n' reviews by SphereofHipHop. com]

News shorts…

Othello has a new album and a new music video out. He wrapped up work on a video for "Let's Just" off of his ***Alive at the Assembly Line*** album. It's a fantastic new album that showcases the musical talent and growth of one fine Northwest hip-hop artist. Check out the audio samples at Sphereofhiphop.com and also the video at SphereofhiphopTV.com. (myspace.com/othello)

Finally... after a wait of over 2 years, Illect Recordings is proud to unveil the new album from **Beat Rabbi & Deepspace5**. *Deepspace5oul* (pronounced deep-space-soul) will hit stores and headphones in December. The cover is a throwback of original hip-hop party fliers from the beginning of hip-hop. From the look of the artwork to the sound of the music, it pays appropriate homage to what is so good about the hip-hop genre without any of the peripheral garbage on TV and the radio. Check this one out. It's destined to be on everyone's favorite albums list for a long time to come. (illect.com / myspace.com/illectrecordings)

The Night Owls series is back with installment number 4! The new edition hits stores November 4th and features a slew of great new exclusives including appearances from: **RedCloud**, **Scribbling Idiots**, Braille, **Kaboose**, Playdough, **Motion Plus**, PageOne and **Because**, **TheBreax**, **Soul P**, **Sivion**, **Man of War**, Propaganda and even a reunion track from **The Pride** (**Sintax the Terrific** and Manchild of **Mars ILL**). What's even better is that this 20 track album retails for about 10 bucks. Pick up this album and the first three volumes at SphereofhiphopStore.com. (syntaxrecords.com)

Sharlok Poems (**L.A. Symphony**) is back with his 3rd solo release ***Blooming Sounds***. The album showcases his unique voice and ever evolving sound. Check for this release! (myspace.com/iampoems)

Have you Joined the Minority? What is "Join the Minority?" It's a clever ad campaign run by a particular label and one of their artists (purposefully not mentioned so it maintains the mystique and surprise when you watch it) that is sure to have you laughing hard! Several videos are planned that urge the viewer to "Join the Minority." Two video shorts are currently available including: ***Dirt Breakfast*** and ***Get Bearded***. (youtube.com/sphereofhiphop)

Photo: Myriam Santos Kayda

Something

tells me that when we reach the end of our roads we will look back and remember the risks we took (or didn't take). We will remember the decisions made in courage. And if we think about it, the names in history that are considered the most profound are the ones who burned their images on our memories with fearlessness in the face of fire. We remember those who weren't afraid to lay everything down for the sake of something worth being faithful to. If you have courage, you will not be forgotten.

As it is with men, so it is with bands.

All around, the music industry plunges into the abyss of desperation further and further with each passing moment in the music industry. The fears of a bear market are all but swallowing creativity and individuality as the mad scramble for the crumbs of mediocrity ensues. We hear it on the airwaves, we see it on the shelves, we witness it on Myspace, Pure Volume, iTunes.

What does this fear I speak of look like? Safe, complacent sounds. Thousands upon thousands of bands who claw, fight, and scream to sound like...

One another.

Courage is the highest of virtues, and rarest of commodities in rock music today, an age of safe decision-making by bands and record labels who are desperate to sell records in a waning sonic economy.

Many indians, few chiefs.

Yet, while the chasm between the fearful and the fearless widens, the rewards for those who are, in fact, willing to step out for the sake of something new, something different, grows exponentially. The thicker the darkness, the more overpowering the light. Something tells me that when it's all said and done, **Thrice** will be among the few who are counted, the few who are not forgotten.

By Andrew Schwab Photo by Myriam Santos Kayda

"...we are doing whatever we want, and it is a great experience..."

Consider the opening lines of the first track off their new LP, *The Alchemy Index*:

"Tell me, are you free in word or thought or deed, while the gallows stand, and bullets lance the bravest lungs? We fold our hands and hold our tongues. Tell me, are you free when the fear falls on you?...Oh to breathe in fire and know I'm free."

Consider that this is the band that brought you *The Artist in The Ambulance* in 2003, arguably the record that preceded the rut of screamo and metalcore that has bombarded us since. It debuted by selling over 40,000 copies in the first week. Consider that this is the band that brought you *Vheissu* in 2005, a vast departure from their previous effort, a far cry from scene-metal, and a beautiful, yet calculated risk to their fans and the industry alike. *Vheissu* blew expectations away with experimentation and progression, surprising those who thought they knew what to expect from this band. Again, it sold in the tens of thousand in its first week alone.

Then, recently, they decided to destroy any and all confines which were remotely limiting them sonically.

It is almost as if Thrice thought that people weren't listening to what they were trying to say with anything prior. So, with vision nothing short of fearless, the band spent last year recording four (4) EPs, which would come to comprise two albums made of four (4!) disks, *The Alchemy Index, Volumes I,II, III, and IV*. Bound by unifying, yet distinctly separate concepts and sounds, this is Thrice at its most defiantly diverse. The concepts? Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. Each with its own metaphors in connection with the human soul.

It is deeply reflective, highly imaginative, both beautiful and barbaric. The first two disks (*Volumes I and II*) were just released, again selling over 30,000 copies first week and debuting in the top 25 on *Billboard*. *Volume I (Fire)* is as heavy as they have ever been. *Volume II (Water)* is nearly the opposite – ambient, with samples, keyboards, and light melodic vocals. They are as different as can be from one another, unified only by vocalist Dustin Kensrue's unmistakable voice. And both contain great, compelling lyrics. This is Thrice, doing it all on their own terms.

I spoke with Dustin Kensrue recently about everything that led up to this...

AS: Prior to the new release, you parted ways with Island Records and moved to Vagrant. Did this have anything to do with the album(s) you guys were making at the time?
DK: We were pretty much done with the new record, and they (Island) began mentioning parting ways. This is something we had wanted to do, but couldn't instigate for obvious business reasons. The label and our band were going in opposite directions. Many of the people who were there when we signed were gone. We just felt like it wasn't going to work. They said they didn't know what to do with our record, so it definitely wasn't a bad break. After we left, we really didn't really shop the music too much. Rick at Vagrant had wanted us for quite awhile, and we had known him for a long time. They are local for us in Southern California, and it seemed like the move that would make the most sense for us. They are a label who can still put a good deal into marketing us, while giving us the creative space we need.

Most are familiar with the pressure from majors to deliver a commercial package with each release, complete with singles, and consumer-friendly material. This album is far from that, and in many ways far from familiar to most of your following. Yet, it's still Thrice. How did you arrive here?
We are definitely getting back to the way we made music before we mad a living on it. It's pretty refreshing. Though, it's not like we have been trying to write for the record label or anything. With Island, they were always pretty hands off, for the most part. But the way we are doing this now, we are doing whatever we want, and it is a great experience. It feels like – on a certain level – we were coming home, back to writing the way we did when we just wanted to make music we liked and for no other reason.

This album is self-produced, recorded, and mixed – a far cry from Andy Wallace and the others who have worked with the band in the past. This is definitely becoming more and more the model for bands who are looking to make economic decisions as the industry becomes more lean. How do you feel about this decision?
Teppei, our guitarist, actually recorded my solo album last year, so I already had a rapport with him in terms of recording. I have a lot of faith in his opinions, and it was a very easy and open process. I feel like, with this record in general, it would have awkward and strange for a producer to come in, because it's so

"We have it great compared to the rest of the world... We don't want to take that for granted...."

broad and all over the place. A producer would have tried to reign things in and focus them, because that is their job. Because we wanted to do the opposite with this, it just made perfect sense to do it ourselves. My hope is that we stick to this formula in the future, for both economic and creative reasons.

Deconstruction seems to play a major role with everything surrounding *The Alchemy Index*. How does this concept play into the title and the divergent sound?
The alchemists were interested in deconstructing nature and dealing with the fundamental elements. We have done the same thing with our music – separating it into the separate facets of our personality as a band. The album title basically described what we were doing in a short and concise way. Each EP has its own theme and its own sound, but each a separate, distinct part of who we are.

And you wrote a Sonnet for each EP?
Yeah, each disk has its own poem I wrote that ties the referenced element into a core spiritual or fundamental concept with humanity.

There are few who can craft lyrics that are profound and provoking, yet still poetic. I would put you in this category, definitely. Yet, one of the greatest moments on this record is track four on the second disk – "Night Diving" – an instrumental. Is there a story behind this track?
It's really surprising the response we have gotten with that song. We didn't see it as a focal track initially. We sat around and made a storyline about a person diving at night and the things that he saw. We storyboarded the whole song and what was happening in the song. A guy is on a boat in the beginning. When the drums kick in he dives into the ocean in old scuba gear (the *20,000 Leagues* bubble-head), then he sinks into the water as the song develops. He witnesses a sperm whale fighting a giant squid, as an observer to what is happening, but not a participant. The creatures and world around him don't even notice him. The vocoder part later in the song he ends up running into these sirens and it seems very peaceful, but then it turns very bad. He is caught up in a threatening situation, yet somehow he makes it back to the surface after nearly losing consciousness. There is a moment you can hear near the end of the song that sounds like emerging from the water. He comes back to the still surface, to the night, and recalls all he witnessed.

Again, things like this song are what made doing this album ourselves so enjoyable...

You have become known as a band who isn't only driven by creativity, but activism. On the last record you brought a fair amount of attention to the Invisible Children cause, among other things. How has charity played a role in what you do?
I don't want to over dramatize why or what we do with that stuff. Something we all share as a band is gratefulness for what we are able to do and where we grew up (Orange County, California). We have it great compared to the rest of the world and even our country. We don't want to take that for granted. We have the opportunity to consistently give through what we are doing and also raise awareness. We have a platform that a lot of people don't have. I have very mixed feelings about publicizing any of this. You don't want your right hand to know what your left hand is doing. I have to swallow my discomfort with that, though, because there is more good done through this than bad. If someone thinks we are doing this to sell records I have to swallow that for the greater good. Every record we give some money to charity. We have tried to keep it consistent. We have seen it add up in great ways, and will continue to to try to give as it is on our conscience.

The songs are saturated with spiritual conceptualism, with biblical references all around. Yet, you are not necessarily known as a Christian band. I am sure the readers want to know where you are coming from with this.
We don't have a spiritual agenda, specifically. But, the things I am interested in are the bigger questions of life. I document my various conversations with God and struggle with Him. I try to be real about who I am and write about things I actually mean or want to mean at the time. There's certain songs I don't even know why I wrote them. I think that it was God using me to say something. When the songs affect someone, my response is: "I didn't really do this, but thank you." I try to live my life in a way that's honoring to God and follow Christ's example, but there are definitely people who call themselves Christians who I wouldn't like to be associated with. Honestly, though I would rather be part of the solution to that than make up some new name for myself.

The Alchemy Index, Volumes I and II, is available now. *Volumes III and IV* coming early 2008.

✖

HERE I COME FALLING

...screaming in the bathroom...

by Tim Hallila

Here I Come Falling didn't start out sounding a thing like they do now. The sextet from Missouri currently churns out melodic screamo-core that draws quick comparisons to The Devil Wears Prada, Chiodos, and early Underoath, but the group began in 2004 as a poppy alternative rock outfit. While evolving their sound, the band went looking for an additional vocalist and found him in the most interesting of places. "We wanted to change our sound, and around that time, we met our screamer at a show…well, actually, we heard him screaming in the bathroom," says guitarist Kasey Smith. "We went and talked to him and just went out from there."

Smith admits that the band's new edge put them in an awkward spot when playing gigs. "We were always the band who didn't quite fit. Every band was either heavier than us or a lot less heavy. We generally got lumped in with the metal bands, since we have screaming, but we didn't really fit."

The band's reinvented sound recently landed them on formidable indie label Rise Records. Smith explains, "We got back from Cornerstone, and we had a show with The Devil Wears Prada. We were talking with them after the show, and their drummer ended up calling Rise the next day, I think. Around the same time, a couple other bands we knew on Rise called in and encouraged them to give us a listen. They heard our stuff and shot us a contract while we were on the road." The signing led to a new album entitled *Oh Grave, Where Is Thy Victory*. The band enjoyed recording with the backing of an established label. "Any recording we had ever done in the past was just a day or two at a time. We would just go in whenever the guy had time available. For this album, we drove up to Oregon for two and half weeks, and just worked on the album the entire time. It was really nice to have a few weeks of uninterrupted time to just write and record," explains Smith.

Christian screamo/hardcore bands in the ilk of Here I Come Falling seem to crop up faster than you can say "circle pit" these days, but it is their upfront approach to their message that sets them apart. "Before our last song, we always talk about what we're about, and we present a basic gospel message," states Smith. However, when asked where the most ministry occurs, he points not to the stage or even the merch table, but the internet. "Most of it happens on MySpace, actually. We try to respond to every single message we get. We have a lot of kids who get on and ask us questions about our faith or need advice. We also have a blog on our MySpace page where people can leave their prayer requests, and we'll pray for them. A lot of them really appreciate that amount of contact, which I guess they don't always get with other bands."

The band displays a sense of responsibility to their fans that extends beyond their online interactions and into their daily life on the road. Smith explains, "We have actually lost a few members because of the standards we have as a band. We really stick to a policy of no drinking, no drugs, no sex – things of that nature. A lot of our fans tend to be on the younger side, and we feel like if there is anyone looking up to us, we have a responsibility to be an example."

RETROACTIVE RECORDS

WHITECROSS – NINETEEN EIGHTY SEVEN (with 6 bonus tracks)
Complete Re-recording of original debut self-titled 1987 release featuring the bonus tracks "Love On The Line" and "Re:Animate" (all Rex Carroll guitar jam/solo) + 4 hidden out takes. Fans of Ratt, Motley Crue, and Stryper won't find anything more worthy of their money than this release! Originally released on Girder Records, this instant classic now finds new life with Retroactive Records.

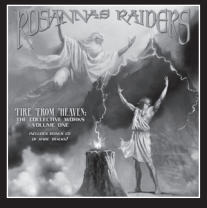
ARMAGEDDON –THE MONEY MASK (Collector's Edition) (2 CD set)
Disc one contains the 1989 (originally on Regency Records) classic metal masterpiece, Money Mask album completely Remastered, plus the bonus track "Blazing Wasteland" from the legendary metal compilation, East Coast Metal (1988). Disc two contains 13 bonus tracksof demos and rarities when they were called Second Chance.

DELIVERANCE – RIVER DISTURBANCE (Collector's Edition)
The original 1994 release in its entirety, completely remastered with all new artwork. Features four high quality bonus tracks (1 rare & 3 previously unreleased). Melodic, dark, and absolutely brilliant progressive metal. Fans of HIM and Savior Machine will rejoice for an enhanced version of the original masterpiece.

DELIVERANCE – AS ABOVE~SO BELOW
Few groups have ever blended epic thrash / speed metal with the elegance and beauty of progressive metal (later period Deliverance) with such devastating skill and brutality. Alternating so many moments of beauty with beastly moments of metallic fury and spine snapping riffs that would seem right at home on a Slayer, Believer, or early Deliverance album.

SARDONYX – MAJESTIC SERENITY / REBEL OF REASON
Remastered and reissued, this previously rare & crunchy thrash metal release now includes the band's original demo! For fans of Testament & early Megadeth!

ULTIMATUM – INTO THE PIT
The masters of thrash metal are back!!! Into the Pit qualifies as a juggernaut of North American metal. Following the footsteps of fellow peers Exodus, Tourniquet, Vengeance Rising, Megadeth. Overkill, and Forbidden, expect fiery, blowtorch riffs and scorching solos, thundering bass, fast drumming and a wealth of Mastodonian rifferry, the boys have clearly learned from their elders, and learned well!



ROSANNA'S RAIDERS – FIRE FROM HEAVEN: The Collective Works (Collector's Edition) 3 albums on 2 CDs. The 1987 release Calling Down Fire and the 1988 release Clothed In Fire (both originally on Pure Metal Records) in their entirety are both on disc 1. Disc 2 has the extremely collectible and previously impossible to find 1985 pro quality 10 song demo called We Are Raiders. Thoroughly remastered for brilliant sonic clarity. For fans of Vixen, Rez, Barnabas, and Heart.

TITANIC – WRECKAGE (THE BEST OF & THE REST OF)
Remastered tracks from the original versions of Maiden Voyage (1st album), Screaming In Silence (2nd album) and their latest Full Steam Ahead. As an added bonus, fans are treated to two rare tracks and two previously unreleased tracks all featuring Robert Sweet from Stryper. 17 total tracks.

MAIN LINE RIDERS – SHOT IN THE DARK
Anthemic hooks, cleverly mixing snarl and attitude, the band has no problems paying homage to their musical rabbis, AC/DC, Guns-n-Roses, and Skid Row, while appealing to fans of modern day bands Vains of Jenna, Buck Cherry, and The Showdown.

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What **Korn** Says

I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THIS INTERVIEW. I'D BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO TALKING TO KORN AGAIN FOR YEARS – EVER SINCE A 1994 INTERVIEW GOT SMOTHERED IN THE THUNDEROUS DRUM RUMBLINGS OF DANZIG SOUNDCHECKING. IN A RARE PRE-CURSOR TO THIS INTERVIEW, THOUGH, I HAD TO PROMISE NOT TO BRING UP ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT BRIAN "HEAD" WELCH LEAVING THE BAND (OR HIS RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOK, *SAVE ME FROM MYSELF*). I DIDN'T KNOW IF I WOULD FIND A GUARDED, ON-EDGE BAND OR WHAT. INSTEAD, WHAT I FOUND WAS A VERY PLEASANT CONVERSATION WITH AN UPBEAT AND HAPPY BASS PLAYER NICKNAMED "FIELDY."

How does the new album feel to you? What are your favorite songs? Why?
I think that "Kiss" is one of my favorite songs. "Starting Over" is definitely a favorite. That's a really different song for me, too. Like, the chorus drumbeat is really weird. The ending of the song goes off really weird. Jonathan does this crazy, different melody. "Hold On" is another one of my favorites. It's structured different. It goes in and out. I don't know. There's so many on there. I don't want to sit there and tell you every song on the album. We'll just stick with those tops.

If you had to describe how you found and built an audience over the years, what would you say? Take us through the different phases or years of the band and how the audience evolved and grew…
(takes big breath) Well, I guess we started out more like a … I remember back in the early days, looking at the crowd and seeing everyone wearing Adidas. It started like that and it ended up turning into a bunch of people that looked like they buy their clothes at Hot Topics. Just only black clothes. There's a lot of black out there. But it started out different and I guess it kind of changed into that. That's the look – clothing-wise, look. Is that what you're kind of asking? How people – the fans – are looking and how they changed today?

Well, that's one aspect, but maybe early on, I'm sure you grew in chunks and the size of the audience has changed and maybe the age and that kind of thing. There's a lot of different ways you could take it, I guess.
The only thing I've noticed differently, for myself, is because a lot of us are different. Like, some days it's young, some days it's old. Some days it's mixed. But the one thing I have noticed is now the older people are bringing their kids to the show. So, you see these older fans with these young kids with Korn shirts on that are like, you know, even 8 years old, 10 years old. I see that. It's kind of crazy – seeing people bring their kids around now.

Wow. How ironic or funny is the title "Family Values Tour" to you? Why or why not? What does that phrase mean to you?
Well, it started out with very first one we did. It was with Ice Cube and Rammstein. I think it was Orgy and … who else was on that? Limp Biskit, I think. A bunch of bands, but everybody knew everybody, so it was kind of like a big family out there. So, it kind of started like that. But then we kind of saw how corrupted everybody was and kind of took a big play off of that. And then you look at the whole world and how many screwed up families there are. I don't know, it just kind of did its own thing.

How important is self-esteem to you and your bandmates? Why?
Self-esteem? I think… For us, it's obviously a little bit easier, you know? We're in a big rock band, so we think we're cool. (laughs) To ourselves it seems easier. But when I meet fans every day and see how nervous they are… I think, 'Why are you guys so nervous? We're just regular people.' But, I guess we're not. I see myself as regular. I'm a pretty regular dude. I go walking around the malls by myself. I do everything by myself. I don't roll with any security. I don't do anything. I don't know if that's my self-esteem or what it is, but that's how I roll. I just noticed. It just trips me out that people are so nervous to meet me, when I feel like I'm just a regular dude, but I guess I'm not.

What do you think of Jesus Christ?
What's that?

What do you think of Jesus Christ?
I think that, um, He is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

Cool. What do you think about that phrase, where He claims to be "the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father but by Me?"
That's exactly what I think.

Cool, what do you think of the band P.O.D. and how they handle their faith in their career and the "everyday life of a touring musician?"
Um, I don't really know 'em that well. I mean, I know 'em and if I see 'em, hanging out; but I know that when somebody says they're a Christian that doesn't mean what everybody thinks, because everyone wants to point the finger whenever a Christian fails at something or does something wrong or sins, but in reality, when you look at the Word, and it says, "The devil is like a roaring lion, looking to devour," he's looking to kill somebody. It doesn't say, "Oh, except for Christians!" So, when people see a Christian fall or fail, they, like, "Oh, you hypocrite! You fake!" It's like, everybody's a sinner, man! Everybody messes up. I don't know. I think they're doing the best that they know how to do.

That's a good point…
They might be better than me. I don't know. (laughs)

What is your current bass rig setup? How would you explain your bass sound to a student wanting to learn?
I play a Mesa Boogie. 2000 head. I'm running, actually, two heads per cabinet and each cabinet has 4 10's in it. Solid state and tube… Through my K-5 Signature bass, Ibanez.

Is that a stereo signal going out?
I'm not sure. I mean, I would think so. I don't know, though.

I've got a question for the rookie: What would be the key ingredients in dialing in that "metal sound" – that fullness of tone and distortion that, say any band on Ozzfest has but a typical bar-band wannabe does not? How can someone achieve that sound in reality?
I think turn it to 11, gain-wise. Get as much distortion as you can and, um… I mean, as far as guitar… For bass, I don't know. My bass is so different and not stereotyped that I don't even know how to get a stereotype bass tone. I think you've gotta do it with a pick in the metal world. But I don't play with a pick.

I remember Doug Pinnick of King's X kind of described his bass sound, that he kind of styled after (John) Entwistle of The Who, where he kind of runs it through a couple Marshall 4x12's and … I don't know how close that is to yours, but it sure gets a big sound.
You know, for me, I find that 10's are more punchy. 12s, for me, get a little, like… It depends. Maybe he's playing with a pick. I like the real punchy sound.

(Editor's note: I had a funny feeling that my "facts" and memories were a little fuzzy on this and, since we're debating the finer points of cabinets, I thought I'd call Doug up and get the skinny. Sure enough, my memory was bad. He uses 8x10 cabs and has been "preachin' em" for years. He agrees with Fieldy, you can't get any punch with anything but 10's)

I've got a question I wrote down here in advance. It's kind of funny, because you brought up the kids getting nervous at Ozzfest, but here's my long-winded question: A few years ago I ran into Aerosmith's Joe Perry and Brad Hamilton at Hamley's toy shop in London. As much as I'm used to interviewing celebrities – most of which became rock stars after I had reached adulthood, but these guys were huge when I was growing up in the late 70s. I was kind of nervous and everything. What celebrity encounters have found you thrown off your game? Please tell us some stories.
Wow. Give it to me one more time, man.

I shared with you my story of running into Aerosmith and how I'm used to dealing with celebrities, but I was kind of ga-ga because they were rock stars when I was, like, 12 years old. I'm curious what kind of celebrity encounters that you've had through your years with Korn that've kind of made you slip into fan mode. Tell us a funny story if you've got any.
Man, hold on a second. (long pause) Thanks. I had to find a better area. It's noisy in that area. One more time, sorry! It sounds like a good question. That's why I'm interested.

Alright. Have you heard part of it already?
Yeah: Aerosmith; when you were a kid, 12 years old. And then what?

Now that I'm… I've been a journalist doing this thing for, like, 22 years, so nothing really phases me, as far as celebrities go. But a couple of years ago, when I ran into Aerosmith, because they were stars when I was a kid, it threw me off of my game. I'm wondering if that's happened to you, if you have any stories of running into celebrities, where it kind of freaked you out?
Actually, um, I was getting gas down by my house. I'm the same way. I'm around all that and I don't have a problem, but I was getting gas and I ran into the guitar player of Def Leppard and he walked up to me and goes, "Hey man! How are ya doing? I play for Def Leppard." And his son was in the car. He said, "This is my son. He loves Korn." I was like, "Hey, how are you guys doing?" And he goes, "I live in the same neighborhood as you." And I was like, "That's cool." I was kind of like, I didn't know what to say and by the time that he left I didn't know what to say to the dude. After he left, I was like, 'Man! I should've got his number. He's my neighbor.' I don't know why I thought that he was any different than anyone else. If it would've been anyone else, I would've said, "Yo, man. Give me your number! Let's hang out." But I hate to say it, but maybe I got nervous! 'Cuz Def Leppard has been around for so long. I was mad. If I ever run into him again, I'll go, "Hey man, I was nervous. We're neighbors," exchange numbers, "Let's have a barbecue." That's probably my one encounter that I can remember. Normally I'm pretty good with that myself.

I've got a hypothetical question for ya.
You've got some good questions, man!

Well thanks, man. I like to give you something different, because I'm sure you just get the same old questions over and over again.
Okay, what've you got?

If you could magically change one or two things about big rock shows – no matter how big or how small – what would you change? (I'm talking about you having the ability to change people, anything… Please explain the "why" of any of these changes.)
I think I'd like to put a huge, almost a clear glass screen in front of the stage that would magnify the fans, so everybody could see that was way far in the back. It's probably expensive to do, but almost like a big tv screen that you could see through, you know what I'm trying to say? I think that would be pretty cool.

That would be a trip. I could see that maybe happening someday.
Yeah, I think so.

I've got a list of a bunch of bands. If you can, comment on the following bands:
AC/DC?
Dirtbag music. That's a good thing! That's what it reminds me of. I'm a dirtbag, though.

Yeah, simple, common, every day. I love it. Stryper?
Jesus.

Evanescence?
Gloomy.

Slayer?
Satanic.

Public Enemy?
My heroes when I was in high school.

King's X?
Who?

King's X?
Man, different.

Limp Bizkit?
Man, when they were doing it, they were hot.

Flyleaf?
They're unique.

Metallica?
Definition of metal.

Eminem?
(turns to someone there with him) He asks me about a band and I comment on who they are. The last one was Metallica and I said, "Definition of metal." (I'm reminded again that someone could be listening in to this conversation to see if I bring up Head…) Eminem? Talented.

Led Zeppelin?
Timeless.

Creed?
I don't even know a song.

Black Sabbath?
Ahead of their time.

Frank Marino & Mahogany Rush?
Frank Marino and Nahogany Bleh? I don't even know that one!

(laughs) Okay, and the last one: Pick somebody else. Fill in the blank.
Oh, you want me to pick somebody else?

So, if you could go back and just watch an event in your life, which event do you think you'd go back and watch? And why?
(long pause) Man! I think I would go back and watch… These are scary questions, man! Because I've gotta be careful of what I'm saying, because 'Do I really wanna go back and watch that?!' I know some things might sound fun to go watch, but do I really want to? I don't know if I want to go back and watch anything. I'm right where I'm supposed to be. What about you? Let me ask you!

Ha ha. Okay. Well, I would go back to November of 1980 and I was a senior in high school and on the football team and we were playing Mammoth in the C.I.F. playoffs, and we got ripped off by the referees in three major things that they actually admitted the following Tuesday that they did wrong; so I would go back and change that game and make sure the refs officiated it correctly, so we would at least be able to go into the next round.
Oh yeah? Alright. (doesn't sound too impressed)

Check it out: I'm working on it. It'll be out in, like, a year.

Right on! How's that going?
I'm working on it, man. I've got the things written. It's going to be an easy read. Like, each chapter's only going to have, like, a page and a half of, like, a daily whatever. A daily devotional. What's good?

That's awesome! I look forward to reading it, man. I'll have to get a copy.
Cool, man.

I appreciate you taking the time to talk to me. I hope to see you in San Antonio in a couple weeks.
Yeah, sure. Come out. I'll pick your brain.

Oh, cool. If we can hook up. I'll talk to the publicist about that.
Yeah, if you need passes or whatever, I'm sure they'll take care of you.

"I see babies look up in the sky and smile. I'm like, 'What are they doing?'"

Yeah.
Icon. The best rock band nobody knows about.

What is left for Korn to accomplish? What are some of your goals?
We'd like to play stadiums. We've always been trying to accomplish that. That's about it, because I think we've done everything else.

If you had to make a list of the pro's and con's of being a famous, platinum-selling band, what would be some of the pro's and some of the con's?
I think the pro's would be having and making good money. The cons would be making good money. The pro's would be having to only pretty much work very minimal, but the con's of that would be being away from my family a lot. Pro's would be getting to travel and see the entire world. The con's being away from my family. I don't know what else.

If you could go back in time, and let's say they gave you, like, seven days – a week – to make changes, what thing or things would you change?
I could go back in time and change how many things?

You've got a week to go back in time. You can go back to any time period in the history of the universe, but you have seven days. What thing or things would you change?
In the world or about myself?

Either one.
Seven days to change things… I wouldn't change anything, because I don't think I'm smart enough to even do that. I've gotta just trust God.

You can tell I've thought about it! (laughs)
I guess I'd like to go back and watch myself as a baby and be able to know what I was thinking and seeing when I was a baby.

Wouldn't that be wild – to know what you were thinking when you were a baby?
Yeah, man! I see babies look up in the sky and smile. I'm like, 'What are they doing?' I wanna go back and watch and know what I was thinking and seeing when I was a baby.

That would be intense. Well, what are some of the best things about living in or around the Mojave Desert?
I don't know. I don't live there!

You used to, though, didn't you? Didn't you live in Bakersfield?
No, that ain't Mojave Desert, but I guess you could change the question.

What are some of the best things about living in Kern County?
I think the music scene there is good. I guess because there's nothing to do, but you've gotta make some music or not. I don't know. There's not a whole lot to do.

Well, right on. Is there anything else you wanted to address or talk about?
I've got a book coming out that I'm working on. Called Got The Life. It's going to be like a daily devotion book.
(Publicist interrupts to let us both know that we need to "wrap up.")

Hey, if you can pass on a message for me?
What is it?

I did an interview with Jonathan back in '94, back right when your first album was coming out in Austin, Texas. It was one of the best interviews I've ever done, but we were in a dressing room that had concrete walls and Danzig was soundchecking at the time and when I went to transcribe the interview later, all I could hear was that big drum ('baghhh-bugghhh") drowning out every word. I was never able to print it. So, tell Jonathan I'm sorry. It was a great interview.
Alright, I will, man. I'll let him know.

I'm glad I got to talk to you guys again, even though it took many, many years to make it happen.
It's cool Perfect timing. If you would have got me many, many years ago, I couldn't answer none of your questions.

Yeah, we all change, don't we?
Yep. Well, not everybody! Some people are late bloomers.

Yep, that's rough. Well, cool, man. I hope we can hook up in a couple weeks.
Yeah, for sure, man. If you do come out, find me and we'll rap out.

Alright, will do. Have a good one, man.
You, too.

✖

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47 ALBUMS 52 ENTERTAINMENT 53 BOOKS & GADGETS

DEMON HUNTER

STORM THE GATES OF HELL

Being HM Magazine's requisite Demon Hunter album reviewer, I'm always stoked when the band releases a new album. That same excitement welled up in me just before spinning their recent offering, Storm The Gates Of Hell.

Surprisingly, this is the first Demon Hunter album that wasn't immediate for me. You know, the ones that grab you from the beginning, and you just know that the entire disc is going to be killer. All that being said, this is still a solid fourth outing. Opening with the fast, furious, and frantic title track, drummer Yogi displays his speedy chops throughout. The breakdown at the end is a definite standout, reminiscent of Lamb Of God. Lead single "Fading Away" features keyboards, something that is becoming very common in today's rock and heavy metal. Ryan Clark's melodic vocals shine here. Guitarists Don Clark and Ethan Luck exhibit their start-stop technicality on "A Thread Of Light," and Jon Dunn (bass) holds down the bottom end the way it should be. The standout for me is "Sixteen." Against a backdrop of rich orchestration, the song unfolds and builds into an astonishing pre-chorus featuring former Living Sacrifice vocalist Bruce Fitzhugh. And I've got to say, it sure is nice to hear his distinct scream again.

Once more produced by Aaron Sprinkle (Anberlin, The Almost) and mixed by Machine (Lamb Of God, Clutch), the production is some of the cleanest and slickest you'll find anywhere in the metal realm. Lyrically, Clark uses his usual metaphors to convey the band's message. "Thorns" addresses cutting, a very real and growing concern among today's society. "Carry Me Down" is a plea to family and friends not to grieve for a deceased loved one whose salvation is secure, while "I Am You" brings the band and their fans together in our plight against the things of this world.

Storm The Gates Of Hell? To that I say, "Go get 'em!" [SOLID STATE] CHAD OLSON

Rating system

05 *CLASSIC*
04 *FABULOUS*
03 *SOLID*
02 *SUSPECT*
01 *AMISS*
***** *1/2*

HERE I COME FALLING

OH GRAVE, WHERE IS THY VICTORY

Whoever taught Underoath how to rip screamo clean in half into ravenous intensity and euphoric relief with finesse, must have taken Springfield, Missouri's Here I Come Falling as their next pupil. Carried by vocalist Colby Moore's screams, the songs on *Oh Grave, Where Is Thy Victory* are quick to erupt into teasing breakdowns accented by acute dirty rock licks. Despite the heaviness of it all, the tracks only truly flex their strength when guitarist Jeff Choates takes the reins and steers the choruses into ethereal empyrean with his contrasting melodic background vocals – please also note the occasional and appropriate accompanying synths/piano as track intro/outros. But unlike their fellow older alumni, they never linger the melody long enough to completely soar. ~~[RISE] DAN FRAZIER~~

A DREAM TOO LATE

INTERMISSION TO THE MOON

Anyone who has ever spent anytime trekking through the wilderness will tell you that there are a few essentials that one must have at all times: food, water, good boots, and a map. While the other three items are important, it is the map that is the most indispensable item in a traveler's pack – if you get lost on your journey, having food, water, and boots lose some of their effectiveness. Yet, what makes the map the item that can cause the most consternation to the voyagers is that, the slightest error in judgment can cause the travelers to drift precipitously off their intended course. And this is what has happened with A Dream Too Late on *Intermission to the Moon*, their new album on Tooth & Nail Records, in that, the further the listener progresses through the album, the further off track the band ends up from their initial sound. The record embarks upon a '80s-influenced dark pop motif that has some muscle ("Do You Believe (in ghosts)" and "Trendsetter" are solid songs), but eventually descends into a blasé series of songs filled with average-sounding guitar fuzz, tinkling keyboard noises, and cliché du jour that is the dueling male emo vocal. *Intermission to the Moon* sadly fails to live up to its potential – the band should have cranked up the '80s sulk and decreased the '00s mope. ~~[TOOTH & NAIL] ADAM P. NEWTON~~

BRADLEY HATHAWAY

THE THING THAT POETS WRITE...

Just get this album … now. If you appreciate the craft of songwriting and music, if you appreciate honesty and truth in words, if you cherish Rosie Thomas and you're hoping Sufjan Stevens picks your state for his next album, this album will delight you. One sign of a new album/music that I know I'm going to love is when I get that jealous feeling when I hear the lyrics for the first time. 'Dang! Why didn't I write that?' The words seem so familiar and just right. I get jealous of the songwriter's ability to snatch them out of the air. It's shocking that the beat poet that I love is making music now, but when it's this good, it's only natural and easy to embrace it. The packaging is amazing and well thought out. There's a dvd and pages and pages of thoughts, conversations, journals, photos, poems, and lyrics. If you had to make the difficult choice of which items to pick up as you escape the flames of a burning house, this might be one of those treasures you clutch during your exit. ~~[YOU ARE A SNOWFLAKE] DOUG VAN PELT~~

COPELAND

DRESSED UP AND IN LINE

It's easy to get skeptical of "greatest hits" records. It's like a perfect marketing scheme for labels that pretend like downloading doesn't exist: Just put all of a band's best songs on a CD and re-sell it. It's not long before the public just starts making the mix tapes themselves, including the only songs they want. That's not really the case with Copeland's latest release, *Dressed Up and In Line*. The band took the time to recreate their original songs and feed them back to you in different fashions: slow versions, acoustic versions, cover songs. The result is definitely a wonderful CD to listen to, but it works better for people who are already fans of the band. They included the two greatest Copeland songs ever written – a slow version of "You Love to Sing" and a re-mastered version of "May I Have This Dance" – and they sound just as good on this record as the original. If you're a Copeland fan, pick this record up without worrying about conventional "greatest hits" worries. ~~[THE MILITIA GROUP] DAVID STAGG~~

SAINTS NEVER SURRENDER

HOPE FOR THE BEST...

Unapologetic with their influences, Indiana's Saints Never Surrender refuses to waste their time with piercing screams or elongated solos. Instead, the Midwestern five-piece almost returns the hardcore genre (inadvertently or not) to form by pumping out passionate, expeditiously short songs each layered with formulaic gang vocals, energetic growls, and mini-epic fretwork – and boy is it addictively fun. As vocalist Tony Blard erupts: "These songs that we sing aren't just words, but our dreams," on the uplifting "Our Actions," you can't help but involuntarily wipe the sweat from your forehead and continue to jump around. ~~[BLOOD & INK] DAN FRAZIER~~

DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL

THE SHADE OF POISON TREES

While there's an obvious disparity between being labeled "King of Pop" or "Godfather of Soul" versus something like "Father of Emo," at least Chris Carabba still holds a title of some sort. With his band Dashboard Confessional, Carabba has pioneered a trail of musical sorrows that countless other whiny boys in girls jeans have followed for the last decade or more. There's no doubt that Carabba is the best at his craft, spinning simple three-minute acoustic yarns while crying foul over love won and lost. Dashboard's latest, *The Shade of Poison Trees*, features that and only that on a one item musical menu that might taste good but leaves you wanting more. "Little Bombs," "These Bones" and "Thick As Thieves" all bear Carabba's signature earnest delivery and, in some ways, he's never sounded better. It's the voice of maturity returning to the same style and sound from his musical youth, thus describing both the promise and problems with *Poison Trees*. It's the grown-up son still living in his parents' basement – sure he is better than ever at respecting their property and cleaning up, but it's still time to leave. Carabba tried to do just that on 2006's *Dusk and Summer*, a beautiful departure from typical Dashboard fare, but album sales hit an all-time low. It's a shame, then, that Carabba chose comfort over challenge. ~~[VAGRANT] MATT CONNER~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Demon Hunter *Storm The Gates Of Hell*	04	03
Here I Come Falling *Oh Grave, Where Is Thy Victory*	04	04
A Dream Too Late *Intermission To The Moon*	03*	02
Bradley Hathaway *The Thing That Poets Write About...*	04	
Copeland *Dressed Up And In Line*	04	03*
Saints Never Surrender *Hope For The Best Prepare For The Worst*	03*	03*
Dashboard Confessional *The Shade Of Poison Trees*	04	03
Main Line Riders *Shot In The Dark*	03	
Lost Dogs *The Lost Cabin and the Mystery Trees*	04	04
Canterbury Effect *We Are All Dogs*	03	03*
Kevin Max *The Blood*	03*	03
Greg Summerlin *All Done In Good Time*	03	04
Edison Glass *Time Is Fiction*	04	04
Doug Burr *On Promenade*	04	

MAIN LINE RIDERS

SHOT IN THE DARK

How could this album not be fun? Oh, hadn't you heard? Cliffy (fka Cliffy Huntington) has a new band – a glamified roots rock band called Main Line Riders. Imagine Poison getting all nostalgic with The New York Dolls and performing fast and furious in a small club like CBGB – knowing that a surviving Ramones member was in the crowd watching, of course... Very fun, very melodic, very well done... While no one was sure if The Darkness was a serious band or a well-timed joke, Main Line Riders, like Dragonforce, should avoid this confusion by sheer performance skills alone, but it helps that the songs have some substance, too. Case in point: the rockin' "Throwin' Bones To The Wolves" or the acoustic-driven ballad, "Here I Am." [RETROACTIVE] DOUG VAN PELT

LOST DOGS

THE LOST CABIN AND THE MYSTERY TREES

Our family has an old dog. He limps a bit, he doesn't hear too well, and he quite frankly smells bad most of the time. Such negative characteristics are true of most aging canines, like our dear little Sparky, but they certainly don't apply to the Lost Dogs. Terry Taylor, Mike Roe, Derri Daugherty and now Steve Hindalong are sounding better and better all the time. Highlights on this latest effort include the noisy garage rock of "Get Me Ready," the epic story "Only One Bum In Corona Del Mar," and the Dogs' gut-level take on WWJD with "That's Where Jesus Is." On many recent Dogs recordings, Taylor wrote almost all of the songs. And while he still provides the lion's share of new material with *Lost Cabin*, it's a special treat to find pen labor from a few of the other talented "cats" in the band. For instance, Daugherty co-wrote the beautiful country weeper "Whispering Memories" with Hindalong, and sings it with pure, unrestrained heart. Mike Roe, who is referred to by his nickname "Dr. Love" in Daugherty/Hindalong's "Burn It Up," also performs his own "One More Day." Why would you ever want to teach these Dogs new tricks? They've perfected and personalized the old ones so well. [FOOLS OF THE WORLD] DAN MACINTOSH

CANTERBURY EFFECT

WE ARE ALL DOGS

If you're old enough, you might be able to reach back into the deep recesses of music history and remember when the word "emo" had a positive connotation. This was a time when the music was passionate and driving, the lyrics were filled with grit and substance, and the people on stage playing the music weren't wearing overly tight girl jeans and eye makeup. Bands like Sunny Day Real Estate, Texas Is The Reason, Jawbreaker, and Dear Ephesus created songs full of discordant yet tasty riffs and big vocals, while eschewing the need to slickly and cutely produce music for TV and radio consumption. So, with the release of *We Are All Dogs* on Crossroads of America Records, Canterbury Effect steps up and declares that such music is still valid, still worthy, and still being created. There is no bombast or bluster here, just 13 strong songs made by an equally strong band who beset display their wares on "The Water's Warm and It's Getting Warmer" and "Oh My God, I Totally Hate This Place." This is a solid album that's chock-full of heart and depth, brimming with a straightforward musical tenacity that's often found lacking in contemporary rock records. [CROSSROADS OF AMERICA] ADAM P. NEWTON

KEVIN MAX

THE BLOOD

Kevin Max may not be the most commercially successful ex-dc Talk member, but he's oftentimes its most adventurous third. *The Blood* is an unpredictable, yet rewarding tour through some of Max's favorite spiritual songs. Max has surrounded himself with musical friends you'd hardly expect to see in the same studio together. For example, he reunites with his dc Talk mates for a psychedelic performance of Prince's "The Cross," then is later joined by Joanne Cash (Johnny's sister) for the closing "One Way-One Blood." Other guests include Vince Gill and Amy Grant on a jubilant "Up above My Head I Hear Music in the Air" and Mary Mary's Erica Campbell for "People Get Ready." Rather than a collection of strictly gospel covers, *The Blood* takes on both old and new Christian-themed songs. "The Old Rugged Cross" is, of course, a Sunday hymnal favorite, but "The Cross" is not in any hymnal – although it oughta be. When Max tries too hard to be entertaining, he can sometimes come off too much like Bill Murray's lounge singer character on *SNL*. But here, Max sounds sincerely inspired throughout. [INFINITY MUSIC] DAN MACINTOSH

GREG SUMMERLIN

ALL DONE IN GOOD TIME

Imagine an early adulthood sequel to Brian Wilson's teenage symphony to God, *Smile*. But instead of the genius Beach Boy overseeing the proceedings, a braintrust of talent whereby Mitch Easter's power pop classicism, Sufjan Stevens' fanciful hookiness and Jonathan Rundman's everyman observational geekiness all coalesce and become responsible for following up such a masterpiece. Add a sprinkling of Bacharach-David's songwriterliness and what the sounds to be oblique expression of Christian conversion somewhere in the plotline. Former alt-country cat Greg Summerlin manages the acheivement without any of the aforementioned folks' help, and it makes for some strangely rocking, articulate beauty. In added touches of obfuscation and creative whimsy, Summerlin sings most of the parts of this easily stage-adaptable 14-song cycle by himself, but sometimes gets assists from guest female vocalists. Neither are the songs in order of the plot, but that's no hindrance from enjoying Summerlin's giftings. Packaging and artwork proclaim an "event" album, but the artistry it surrounds speaks with as much humility as it does ambition. [SUPERPHONIC] JAMIE LEE RAKE

HORDE

LIVE IN OSLO (DVD)

It finally happened. At least once. Horde, Mortification drummer Jayson Sherlock's infamously quasi-unidentifiable holy unblack metal aggregation, played a gig in Norway. You may already have the Nordic Fest concert recording. Now experience the glorious cacophony in your choice of color or black & white! That is the one bonus option on this video concert document. Sherlock, arrayed in black hood over his face, assays the whole of his side project's only studio album while his bandmates sport dusky ski masks as they flail axes. Immaculately bearded Pilgrim Bestarius of Crimson Moonlight performs his guest vocals on "Invert The Inverted Cross" bereft of anonymous-making cranial adornment. The fans are packed too tight to mosh, so Hordic appreciation is paid by headbanging and upward-gazing, rapt attention. Unless perhaps you were a Mentors fan, you've never seen anything like it. And even if you have, it wasn't accompanied by the kind of Satan-bashing thundersquall heard here. Yay! [VERIDON] JAMIE LEE RAKE

EDISON GLASS

TIME IS FICTION

Signs of growth are all around *Time Is Fiction*, the sophomore label release from the Long Island indie rock band Edison Glass. Their first spin, *A Burn or a Shiver*, on Credential Recordings garnered critical acclaim, featured A-plus production from Brad Wood (Smashing Pumpkins) and indicated significant potential. But it was still the first step. The problems plaguing their debut are now gone: the lack of cohesion, the all-too-obvious influences. Instead, the stimuli are subtle, the identity congealed, the musicianship improved. *Time Is Fiction* simply feels more like an album. The title track, "Time is Fiction," burns the same vigor as Muse's "Muscle Museum," while "See Me Through" pulses with slight Editors tendencies. Yet even those songs reveal a sound distinctly Edison Glass. Even still, the stunning "All Our Memories" stands completely on its own, proof of the maturity still to come for Edison Glass. [CREDENTIAL] MATT CONNER

DOUG BURR

ON PROMENADE

This Austin, Texas recorded album is an organic trot through some very Springsteen-esque stories of this life and the one to come. I mean, who else could rhyme "daddy" and "Cincinnatti," but at least a distant fan or disciple of the boss? When Burr reaches for those high notes (like in the song "Whippoorwill"), he sounds six degrees closer to a Neil Young. At times dry as well as wet sounding, the mixtures of voices and pedal steel, harmonica, Wurlitzer organ, fiddle and brushed drums ease into the ears and soul like a well-worn family song. Engaging and warm, Burr's an excellent song crafter. If he were on trial for such a "crime," then *On Promenade* would be enough evidence to put him away for a long time. [VELVET BLUE MUSIC] DOUG VAN PELT

QUICK AND THE DEAD

GOING HOME

Take several spoonfuls of the sort of melodic pop punk made famous most recently by the likes of Fall Out Boy, mix in a little of the emo-tinged pop of acts like Run Kid Run and Number One Gun, and you should have a pretty good idea what to expect here. For their part, the guys in QATD give us their dead level best by way of catchy-as-all-get-out hooks and harmonies, as well as guitar riffs that alternate between driving and soothing. As catchy and constructed as the album can be at times, it's hard to get past the fact that bands like this are seemingly a dime a dozen these days. It's certainly good for a head-bopping sing-along, but music snobs are likely to turn up their noses. Depending on your tastes, these guys may be worth a spin. ~~[INDIE VISION MUSIC] TIM HALLILA~~

VOICE OF THE MYSTERONS

THEY HAVE PULLED DOWN DEEP HEAVEN ON THEIR HEADS

Remember the last time you had zombie-fied fun at a show? Was it Ghoti Hook? The Deadlines? Blaster The Rocket Man (or their boy-ish pre-cursor)? Maybe even during that "George Romero Will Be At Our Wedding" song at a Showbread show? You can re-live that zaniness with this crazy outfit that's long on fun and short on seriousness. The voice of Blaster The Rocket Man (Otto) goes up high at just the right times, inflecting like the B-52's Fred Schneider. The packaging is quite complete, with lyrics and illustrations to guide one through the befitting and spastic storyline. ~~[BOOT TO HEAD] DOUG VAN PELT~~

GLASS HAMMER

CULTURE OF ASCENT

Prog' and art rock fans that are not already familiar with Glass Hammer need to jump on this progressive band wagon. *Culture of Ascent* is their latest, and in typical Glass Hammer fashion it is an elaborately fantastic concept album, this one is about climbing to the icy peaks of a mountain, literally, and figuratively as a spiritual journey. Their last release, the critically acclaimed double disc set *The Inconsolable Secret*, was definitely their high water mark. While it is not necessarily fair to compare the two, *Culture* does not quite live up to the expectations set by *Inconsolable*. That said, it still has a lot to offer and comes in a close second. The production, as always, is amazing and studio wizard Steve Babb has a recorded a beautiful record with a lot of proggy chord changes, amazing guitar techniques and cool keys. Ironically, the highlight and lowlight of the album centers on the band Yes. Founding Yes member and singer Jon Anderson is a guest vocalist on this album and his contribution is significant. If you're a Yes fan or a Jon fan, this album is a must. However, Glass Hammer's decision to do a cover of the Yes classic "South Side of the Sky" and put it as the album opener was not a good one. They do a descent job with it and while it is one of the better covers of a Yes song I have ever heard, to open a new concept album with a cover tune is not the most artistic choice. It would have worked better as the album closer or as a bonus track. While it fits lyrically, it sounds out of place musically and the band should have probably stretched its songwriting muscle more with an original for the opening cut. Do not despair; this is still one of the best prog records released this year. Glass Hammer newbies should start with *The Inconsolable Secret* and then pick up *Culture of Ascent*. ~~[ARION] DR. TONY SHORE~~

CHRISTOPHER KINCAID

LEARNING TO WALK ALONE

Charlotte native Christopher Kincaid chose an almost literal title for his debut solo album *Learning To Walk Alone* that hints at his previous participation in staple Queen City bands such as Hopesfall and Laurelei. These acts were renown for their innovative hardcore and screamo sound respectively, however Kincaid's latest act *One Amazin Kid* is where the bald veteran virtuoso discovered a much more mellow musical direction and here he superbly continues it. Perpetually melodic and consistently ascending, the album's twelve rock songs (some ruled with an acoustic) carry an appropriate aesthetic of reverence and reverie proving impossible to ignore Kincaid's not so secret weapon: his falsetto soaring to uncanny heights like an archangel returns to the heavens. ~~[TEXTBOOK MUSIC] DAN FRAZIER~~

MANIC DRIVE

RESET & REWIND

Listening to Manic Drive is like going to dinner with someone who can't decide what to order. Sure, they're lovely company, but why can't they make up their mind? *Reset & Rewind* opens with "NYC Gangsters," which suggests a hard rock band. On it, guitarist Michael Cavallo sets the table with a driving metallic groove while vocalist Shawn Cavallo screams, albeit ever so melodically. But skip pages to the appropriately titled "Dancefloor." Over a Latin-y acoustic guitar riff, which is augmented by backing female vocals, Manic Drive manically switches to a kinder, gentler Nine Inch Nails beat-driven vibe. Is this dance music or hard rock, and will the real Manic Drive please stand up? It's a shame Manic Drive cannot agree on its favorite musical grub, because much of this music is quite good. It's hard, for example, not to be encouraged by the optimism saturating "Hope," where they sing, "Believe it or not there's hope." Granted, choosing a favorite style is not as simple as the chicken or beef option presented during transcontinental flights. But Manic Drive's schizophrenia is a little hard to digest after a while. Please reset, rewind, and – most importantly – choose. ~~[WHIPLASH] DAN MACINTOSH~~

NEW METHOD

OLD SCHOOL

After I listened to the first song I said aloud one word, "weird." My oldest daughter said, "Yeah, that was weird." As we continued to listen, the weirdness grew. Strange pseudo-emo pop with 70's harmonies and bizarre spoken word bridges. The first two songs ("Temporary Tattoo" and "Yearbook") both long for the good old days. One tune references "faded jeans" and the other "white washed jeans." The lyrical approach is matter of fact as in "Not Into That": "She lived like she was Harry Potter, she lived life worshipping her cat, she was like seeking stars for answers but all she'd say and do seemed foolish 'cause I'm not into (long pause) that." And that's the chorus! It's obviously the lead singer's show. (Doug Meacham) He does all of the many ill-advised background vocals. You would think that the producer might reign him in, but Doug has found a partner in crime. (Kevan Cyka, co-writer, producer) There are two songs that don't go into the twilight zone. ("Run Away" and "A Safe Distance") If New Method would go in the direction that these songs lead, then they might be more listenable to the common man. But most of *Old School* is just weird. ~~[D'VILLE] PAUL Q. PEK~~

Ratings

	DV	Writer
Quick and the Dead *Going Home*	03	02*
Voice of the Mysterons *They Have Pulled Down Deep Heaven...*	03	
Glass Hammer *Culture Of Ascent*	03	03
Christopher Kincaid *Learning To Walk Alone*	04	04
Manic Drive *Reset & Rewind*	03	02
New Method *Old School*	02*	01
Red *End Of Silence [Deluxe Edition]*	03	03
Apologetix *Chosen Ones*	02*	
The Swirling Eddies *The Midget, The Speck & The Molecule*	04	04
MAHTEO *The NuWave Republic*	02	01
The Filthy 42's *Positively South Jersey*	03*	
Palaris *The Pros And Cons Of Redemption*	03	03
Plumb *Blink*	03	02
Kissing Cousins *She's Right*	03	
The Scurvies *Nightprowler*	03	
Fearscape *Scent Of Divine Blood*	04	

RED
END OF SILENCE [RE-ISSUE]

Obviously a re-issue for a band who just released their debut a year ago is a stretch no matter who it is. With that said, Red's attempt to offer something new on the expanded *End of Silence* isn't completely throwaway material. A bonus live disc includes seven songs spanning thirty minutes from a small show in Nashville, showcasing relentless energy and very impressive camera work. Video blogs are a waste, but a quick documentary keeps things personal. For what it is, it's not half bad. [ESSENTIAL] MATT CONNER

APOLOGETIX
CHOSEN ONES

Reacting to or reviewing an Apologetix album often will evoke one of two extremes. One is positive and one is like what one of those record store employees in the movie *Hi-Fidelity* would say in a tirade about art and music to an unsuspecting fan of something very unhip. While my review will not fall in with the latter category, I would love to see such a conversation about Apologetix and the finer points of art criticism and parody from the heart of a purist. That'd be great! To be fair, one almost has to admire the incredible talent that it takes to effectively cover all the musical ground that these guys take on. Not only vocally, but the phrasing of the guitars and capturing the rhythmic vibe of classic rock tunes like "Highway To Hell," "Kashmir" and "Revolution" – that's no mean feat! Any vocalist that even attempts to go after Robert Plant and doesn't fall completely flat? Much respect. The production on this live album does a good job of capturing more song presence than room presence, which is good. A lot of weight in parody, of course, falls on the lyrics. Some of these rhymes might entice cringing, while others are amusing. Perhaps it would be funnier if they went over-the-top with the vocals, like Weird Al does, as opposed to almost a straight-up cover. Hmmm. [PARODUDES] DOUG VAN PELT

THE SWIRLING EDDIES
THE MIDGET, THE SPECK & THE MOLECULE

The genius of Terry Taylor has taken many forms over the past 31 years, from Daniel Amos and the Lost Dogs to The Swirling Eddies. I would love to tell you more about how quirky, cool and fun the new Eddies record is, how it includes "My Cardboard Box," one of Terry's best songs in years, but the editor of HM has asked for a 75-word review. If you like Terry, you'll love this record! [STUNT] DR. TONY SHORE

MAHTEO
THE NUWAVE REPUBLIC

(Question): "Hey dad, can we borrow your guitar? The guys are coming over to play in the basement again." (Answer): "Sure, that sounds fine. You been writing some more songs?" (Q): "Yeah, we found some old poetry from Advanced Comp. that we can use." It reads that bad. It sounds that bad. Those looking for anything remotely redeeming would do well to avoid Mahteo and their anamorphism of indie rock. High school journal lines like "I want to inhale your exhale" and overextended yearning for vocals equal a complete mess of an EP and a waste of your time. [SCOTOMA] MATT CONNER

THE FILTHY 42'S
POSITIVELY SOUTH JERSEY

This New Jersey band is made up of two sets of brothers. They prove the "blood is thicker than water" adage with any song here, as they adroitly pound out the old school sing-along punk ditties with a reckless abandon that never lets loose of the tightness they acheive as musicians. Fans of old-school punk as old as Social Distortion or as new as Children 18:3 should love these fun-loving guys, too. It's a sign of a good songwriter, too, when they can take a familiar feeling and share it so immediately. It's easy to sing along with words like: "you're a creep, you're a creep, and you're wastin' my time." With these infectious hooks, I bet these guys could rip a bandage off a fresh wound and make it sound like like a "whoa-oh" time of great fun. [BOOT TO HEAD] DOUG VAN PELT

PALARIS
THE PROS AND CONS OF REDEMPTION

Cute and charming, the young New England quartet dubbed Palaris fearlessly carries a sparkling smile with every note on their debut album, *The Pros And Cons Of Redemption*. By making it impossible to not clap or coo at all the right places, the band displays an apparent attempt to be the (much) younger brother of pop rock stalwarts Reliant K, Daphne Loves Derby, or even The Rocket Summer. But just like most new bands, growing pains are felt with repetitive chords and choruses. Face it; just like junior siblings, too much glee can sometimes be annoying. [BLUE DUCK] DAN FRAZIER

PLUMB
BLINK

Utilizing many of the same lucid, spacious synths and samples as Leigh Nash's latest collaborative Fauxliage, Tiffany Arbuckle (aka Plumb) has created a postmodern lullaby collection known as *Blink*. While the sentiment isn't completely lost in the process, the effect is largely to keep your eyes closed after listening for any stretch. Arbuckle's strong suit is in her upbeat pop sensibilities (i.e. "Stranded", still the band's best), but here those are laid to rest in favor of slight Sarah McLachlan harmonies, slight acoustics, drifting synth loops and tortoise tempos. "My Sweet, My Lovely," "Always," "Me," and "Sleep" all conjure images of a mobile spinning overtop your head and most tracks on this disc remain unintelligible from another until a full minute into each. Some tracks like "In My Arms" and "Solomon's Song" are both slow but stellar and would work well on any other album, providing solid balladry. Instead here, they sink into Arbuckle's soothing abyss. Sweet? Sure. But Plumb should have never settled for this sleepy effort. [CURB] MATT CONNER

KISSING COUSINS
SHE'S RIGHT

This new 3-song EP from Kissing Cousins gets up close and personal with some uber-stripped-down tunes at a plodding pace yet steady groove. Obvious comparisons will be drawn from the self-indulgent Cat Power, but this group of girls (Heather, Rhea, Cara, and Beth) forge their own path with the catchy single "She's Right." As raw as punk, but the power is one of subdued confidence rather than unbridled distortion. It's not hard to imagine this same sound coming from a burned out Exene Cervenka after years of screaming for LA punks X. The easiest hyperbole would definitely involve throwing the word "post" in front of another genre, as it almost seems reactionary in its lo-fi quietness. Nice. Now, one of these days they'll surprise us all and release a full-length album! [VELVET BLUE MUSIC] DOUG VAN PELT

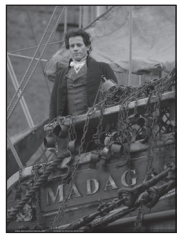
THE SCURVIES
NIGHTPROWLER

Punk rock was never ever ever supposed to sound safe, which is the problem with even the label "pop punk," but let 'em have fun, anyway. The Scurvies are a good die-hard definition for punk rock. They've got that almost gross-your-mother-out name, their songs are 3-minutes or less vignettes on smashin' and grabbin' as a band or living boldly for God. In all it's 16 raw, flying-by-the-seat-of-their-pants old-school punk songs that clock in at under 30 minutes. This one's for anyone that knows what the gutter tastes like or those old punk dawgs who always wished The Altar Boys would take a left turn towards The Ramones. [BOOT TO HEAD] DOUG VAN PELT

FEARSCAPE
SCENT OF DIVINE BLOOD

While some old school metal cliches make their way into the mix, this black metal band from Wollongong in New South Wales, Australia takes something familiar (like the opening bass runs of the 9-minute opus "Inheritance Of Dust") and slaps it upside your head with enough velocity, technical proficiency and production brilliance that it'll do more to remind you just why you love metal than anything else. Three years in the making, Fearscape has topped their *Sleeping In Light* 2004 debut (Rowe Productions) by seemingly crafting exactly the type of beautifully heavy music they wanted to with these six songs, giving no thought to length, knowing that the right vibe and emotion can take its time. This is doom, thrash, black and progressive metal extremely well done. [FEARSCAPE] DOUG VAN PELT

Entertainment reviews
DVDS, BOOKS & GADGETS



01 AMAZING GRACE
FOXVIDEO

Marrying warmth and historical narration together really makes history exciting to discover and learn. This movie certainly delivers, bringing easy-to-love characters to life. It could've used more intensity or stronger extremes, perhaps, but the painful injustices that were fought and the wear and tear of the long-winded fight probably make subtlety and restraint good ingredients for presenting this account of the man (William Wilberforce) and his friends (John Newton, the author of the great hymn the movie is titled after; Thomas Clarkson, the passionate yet rough-around-the-edges patriot for this cause; and the youthful British Prime Minister William Pitt ... just to name a few) that had so much to do with the abolition of slavery. Ya gotta love a movie that is well-written and delivers great memorable quotes. Here's a few: A poignant question is directed Wilberforce's way as he wrestles with a career in the priesthood or politics: *"So, you need to decide: are you going to use your beautiful voice to praise the Lord; or to change the world?"* Newton shows his humility and wisdom in the following quote: *"Although my memory is fading, I remember two things very clearly: I'm a great sinner; and Christ is a great Savior."* And a great line that epitomizes the idiocy of human slavery was uttered when they saw the artifacts of the atrocities in an empty slave ship: *"…we were apes. They were humans."* This might be one of those movies I'd like to keep around for future generations. Wow. *Doug Van Pelt*

02 FANTASTIC FOUR *FOXVIDEO*
The between-character banter stays consistent throughout this comic tale, helping the viewer get past the few logical jumps and sometimes phoney cgi effects also found within. It was a nice combination of classic Marvel tale and modern day realities, like the paparazzi, internet, and gadgets galore. *DV*

03 BEYOND THE GATES *FOXVIDEO*
This one is intense at beginning, middle, end, and even long after it's over. Showing people do something extraordinary in the midst of a horrible situation bridges that middle ground between where we can relate to what the character does as well as the unbelievable choices they later make. The extras are great additions. *DV*

04 TRANSFORMERS *PARAMOUNT*
The celluloid "incarnation" of these immensely popular boy toys from millions of childhoods was done well enough to entertain a broader audience than the grown-up kids that'll relive the old days. By throwing in a boy-meets-girl storyline and killer cgi effects, this two-disc special edition garners the repeat viewing. *DV*

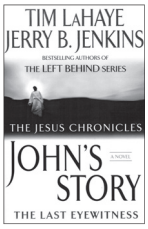
05 RESCUE DAWN *MGM*
Watching this movie with a Vietnam Vet pilot was rich. This harrowing tale is almost hard to believe, but Christian Bale did a good job of re-telling Dieter Dengler's story. Like the *We Are Marshall* DVD reviewed below, the featurettes and documentaries included as bonus material allow the viewer to dive even deeper. *DV*

06 WE ARE MARSHALL *WARNER BROS.*
There's not many surprises in this feel-good movie, but a few things jump out that drive the deep emotions home (like Bobby Bowden having his rival players memorialize the Marshall players on their helmets). The action is realistic, but the characters' relationships shine even brighter. The coach's featurette is also a gem here. *DV*

07 WUSSIFICATION *RIGHT MINDED*
This outspokenly conservative stand-up is more than Bill Maher's antithesis. Stine's fourth DVD/CD counterpoints Dennis Leary/Lewis Black brashness with more measured ruminations addressing country, church & self. Though occasionally soliciting more rapt listening than guffaws, he preaches to his choir with commanding verve. *Jamie Lee Rake*

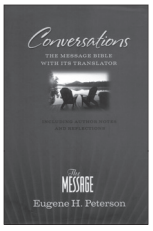
08 REIGN OVER ME *SONY PICTURES*
Sandler's serious roles, as these are called, are almost as cool as his laugh-a-thons. Don Cheadle stars alongside the comedian in a tale of "let me stay in this wounded state" guy who lost his family, which shows Sandler escaping into video games and his headphones. *DV*

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)	100	20	100	40	100	80	100	50
OBSCENITIES	2	2	17	10	24	11		63
SCENES OF GORE			15					
NUDITY / SEXUALITY		1		1				



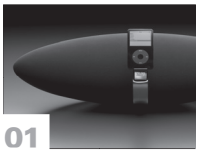
John's Story
LaHaye and Jenkins – Berkley Praise

The two writers behind the gargantuan *Left Behind* series (Tim LaHaye and Jerry B. Jenkins) have tackled a new one – *The Jesus Chronicles*. The hardcover version came out in November of 2006, but the paperback now follows with a more affordable format. It's certainly a good idea to take a historical set of characters (in this case, the last remaining living disciple of Jesus and his compatriots, Ignatius and Polycarp) and contextualize their circumstances with a novelesque lens. The setting is a dirty and dusty Roman empire, the duel "problems" in their path are his imminent arrest and the heretical opposition of one deity-denying Cerinthus. The reader can easily imagine the impetus for John's writing of the fourth Gospel and his book, *Revelation*. It might disappoint some to hear John interpret some of his apocryphal writings; however, including both John and Revelation at the end is quite fitting following their narrative conception. *Doug Van Pelt*



Conversations
Eugene H. Peterson – Navpress

The immensely popular *Message* paraphrase of the Scriptures, which provides a fantastic companion to the English-reading Bible student, benefits here from running commentary by Eugene Peterson. Much like his common language simplification of sometimes wordy Scripture passages, the commentary interspersed around key text throughout is to-the-point and pointed towards personal application as well as understanding. It's great to read his commentary about prophetic passages like Isaiah 53 and 55; the poetry of Ecclesiastes or Song of Solomon; the songs of Psalms; the narratives of Ruth or Exodus; and, of course, the head-twisting parables in the four Gospels. *Conversations* accomplishes a great feat in serving as both a good Bible overview that'll only take as long as a single read-through and a fantastic devotional. *DVP*



Gadgets
B&W, Fashionation, & Griffin

(01) If you've been jones'n' to keep up with those Bose-having iPod speaker system owners, look no further than the mighty **Zeppelin** from B&W. This heavy and, dare I say it, stand-alone art piece is one booming speaker system. Play the right tune and it'll shake the walls of your house with its deep, ported-hole bass design. Pricey? Yes ($599), but it is one fantastic, high-end gadget. The flattened egg-shaped remote is classy, too. (02) The **Universal Star Speakers** ($14.95) are a set of small star-shaped speakers for your portable device. The cool, unique thing about 'em is that they get their power from your player (no need to plug it into an outlet). The sound output is small, but it'll squeak by like a mini tube of toothpaste in a travel situation. (03) The **Reflective Nano Armband** ($12.95) is a lightweight silicone case for the Second Generation iPod nano. It comes with an adjustable armband with reflector strip for nighttime safety (comes in blue, green or orange). (04) Griffin's **Reflect** iPod cases fit all models and have a nice mirrored-chrome reflective face that lets the screen show through the chrome completely clear ($24.99). *DV*

[bowers-wilkins.com, fashionationstyle.com, griffintechnology.com]

The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Ninth)

We continue in this issue to consider the question of why, in an America where a huge portion of the population (reportedly one-fourth to one-fifth) are avowedly Evangelical Christians, who believe that Holy Scripture directs believers "in every good work" (1 Timothy 3:16-17) (which necessarily includes the creation of art by Christians), the Church has failed so miserably to produce effective, quality art (music, film, dance, television, etc.).

In previous articles, we saw this failure being in large part due to a lack of knowledge of Scripture by Evangelicals, caused by both laziness motivated by self-worship in pursuit of pleasure and by deficient theology as a result of disregarding the Bible's ethical demands in favor of feel-good experiences. Such a surface view of Scripture has meant that Evangelicals have lost the ability to see reality (God, themselves, and the world) as it truly is.

Christian art depends in its creation upon a Biblically particularized version of God's Created Reality. The absence of a correct understanding of that reality leads inexorably to inferior, distorted expressions rightly viewed by both Christians and non-Christians as inaccurate and irrelevant representations of God's Creation in its depth and beauty. Bad theology inevitably leads to bad art.

We also began to explore the implications for artistry of a deficient doctrine of Creation. We saw that it leads to a denigration of matter as a medium for the spiritual, as well as to a reduction of the multi-dimensional Creation to a uni-dimensional construct fit only for carrying the propaganda of the wicked and the strong (which is all too frequently "baptized" as "Christian" by Evangelicals).

Art is, of course, expressed through culturally-grounded media, which means that such cultural forms must be critically engaged and transformed by the Gospel as part of the advance of God's Kingdom in service to the Scriptural goal of the Reclamation of All Things (Acts 3:21). This cannot be accomplished except over a period of the passage of time, as God's Creature, History, moves toward the apotheosis of God's Purposes for the world.

If, however, an artist's view of Creation does not sufficiently take into account the fact that the God Who has created all things from nothing (Gen.1; John 1:1-14) and Who upholds all things at all times (Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:13) has not only appointed a beginning, but also a preordained end to all things (1 Cor.15:35-37; Rev. 21:1-5; Isaiah 46: 9-11), the artist will inevitably devalue both the potential for accomplishing God's Purposes in their art in history, as well as the probability that history will fulfill the Purposes for which the Sovereign God has created it.

For most of the Church's existence, Christians have believed that prophecies such as Habakkuk 2:14 ("For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.") to mean that God ultimately, as the Creator and Sustainer of Reality, controlled the flow of time in such a way as to inevitably accomplish His Purposes in history.

To cease to believe that God will successfully accomplish His Goals in history is to surrender to a pessimism regarding what God can accomplish through His People in their lives and callings (including art). The upshot of this aberrance in belief is that Christian expectations and aspirations become fixated on escapism, an escape from a world and history doomed to domination by Satan, in which the only hope for man is to escape into Heaven from the Earth, either by death or the Rapture.

The art resulting from such a belief capitulates to the lie that Satan is the lord of history, and that the Evil One has trumped God forever in time by keeping the Lord from doing His Will in our history. Such art emphasizes the Faith as primarily an escape-vehicle rather than a world-and-life-changing force. Again, non-believers will justly judge such art as irrelevant escapism.

Do we as artists believe that Jesus Christ is the Lord of Earth and time as well as Heaven and eternity? Then let our art reflect optimism in His Power rather than pessimism towards His Sovereignty.

[kempercrabb.net]

The way I see it
Chris Wighaman

DISNEY ON ICE

It's March 2005, and I am in Salt Lake City dropping my wife and kids off at the airport. It just so happens that March Madness [you know, the college basketball tournament] is going on and SLC is the site of the western bracket and Indiana is in that bracket. I decide that I've got some time to kill, so I am going to find some tickets to this game and check out my home state Hoosiers.

So I head over to the Delta Center, home of the Utah Jazz, to see if there are tickets available. As I walk up to the stadium it seems strangely quiet, no scalpers hawking over-priced tickets, no one selling sports junk outside the stadium, but simply chalked it up to being a little early. I walk into the ticketing area and up to the counter with no wait and ask if there are still tickets available for tonight [that is exactly the words I used]. To which the helpful ticket attendant replied "yes, a ton." She asked how many I would need, and I replied, "only one ... it's just me."

"Just one" she confirms with a confused look on her face, yes, just one. Grinning from ear to ear, I am excited. We look through all the available seating where I could purchase a ticket – there were even seats down front! They are obstructed; apparently I wouldn't be able to see "the screen." I don't need to see the screen; all I need to see is the floor. So I confirmed that I would still be able to see the floor [my exact words]. Something about the obstructed view bothers me, as well as the forty bucks more for the ticket, so I settle on a more modestly priced ticket in the center of the floor where I could see all the action. I buy the ticket, giddy with excitement. I am going to see my Hoosiers play Gonzaga tonight. As I walk out of the ticketing area I look at my ticket, unable to believe my good luck and read the words "Disney's Finding Nemo on Ice." Pause. The entire interaction with the ticket lady rewinds through my head like the scene in a suspense movie where the lead actor replays all the clues throughout the movie that leads them to solve the mystery. OH NO, I just bought a ticket to a *Disney on Ice* show, alone, and was very exited to be there. OH NOO, "The Screen" was, like, part of the show where "Nemo and friends" would be. OH NOOO, it's a college basketball tournament, they would be playing at the University of Utah, not at the Delta Center! OH NOOOO, I'm sure security had been alerted, I'd better get out of here!

I can't imagine what that woman thought of me. Our entire conversation we were communicating, sort of, but about completely different things – she's talking Ice Dancing and I'm talking Basketball. Sometimes my faith gets played out this same way. I am vague enough in my faith that someone might never know that I am a follower of Christ. I am different, but if unclarified, I might just be moral, a member of any of the hundreds of religions, hiding something, or just one of those people who is always in a good mood. We see this in so many areas of "Christian entertainment." The mindset of never letting Christ take too central of a role and people will never mark me as "one of them." Be vague enough and I might be accepted mainstream. Now, I'm not advocating buying up every cheeseball Christian T-shirt out there and standing on the street corner with a bullhorn singing "Jesus Loves Me." However, I am saying that we need to be less vague with our faith. We should not be afraid of claiming Christ because He is the difference in our lives. It is through Him that we have found peace, hope, love, and unimaginable joy. That needs to be clear to the world around us; otherwise they might just assume we are really big fans of *Disney-on-Ice* shows.

Devotions
with Greg Tucker

"Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness."
–2 Timothy 2:22a

Growing up I had a buddy who was an avid partyer, so I wasn't surprised when he invested $35 for a gizmo called a "one hit." That was a lot of money for a teenager in 1975, but Randy considered it a worthwhile investment.

For the uninformed, a one hit is a wooden box that holds a small brass pipe on one side and a hidden compartment at the other end, containing just enough marijuana for a pipe load, or one "hit." Hence the name.

Every year Randy went to church camp, and every year on the last night he rededicated his life to Christ. We all did. It was a great way to pick-up girls, but we were also sincere. Back home on Saturday, Randy's routine was the same: he was God's man now, determined to walk the straight and narrow, so he immediately felt compelled to pour out his beer. Next he flushed his marijuana. Then he burned his girly magazines. But his one hit... ah, he put that away high on a shelf somewhere. After all, it cost $35 and that was a lot of money for a teenager in 1975.

It doesn't take a Harvard man to know what Randy turned to in his moments of weakness. After a period of success, he would eventually find himself on tiptoes, reaching to the back of a shelf for his long lost friend, and each time his past habits returned stronger than before.

As Christians it's important we identify the things that tempt us. Maybe there's a person you need to avoid, because he or she pulls you away from God. Perhaps in your case it's a place – a building, business or home that puts you in a compromising situation. Or maybe it's a thing – some object that reconnects you to the person you used to be. That was Randy's problem: he held onto one small gadget, and through that Satan held onto him.

When the Apostle Paul instructed us to flee from the things that tempt us, he was right on the money. This is a day for self-examination. If there's anything that makes it easy to revert to the old you, God wants you to be rid of it. Your success today could hinge on your decision to avoid the sins of your past.

[Greg Tucker lives in your computer at HopeCCA.com]

PICK OF THE LITTER

Daniel Markham/OneWolf
Simple acoustic-driven and mostly laid-back cool rock from a former HM intern! We never knew he had it in him! If we had, we'd have asked him to whip out his guitar and serenade us during every lunch hour during his stay here! His latest 10-song album was produced by Starflyer's Jason Martin (who, of course, doesn't spend his time producing just anybody). (DV)
myspace.com/onewolfsongs

Barcelona
Beautiful, breath-y vocals. Don't forget the piano, rhodes, guitar, percussion, bass, violin, glockenspiel, guitar, pump organ and drums. (DV)
wearebarcelona.com

I am alpha and omega
Great, heavy, powerful five-piece band from rural New Jersey. "Georgia May is 21" is a cool pro-life song. (DV)
myspace.com/iamalphaandomega

Red Letter Bullet
Great scream/sing rock. (DV)
redletterbullet.com

All the Day Holiday
Primo melodic vocals that feel like an aural hug around your ears. (DV)
allthedayholiday.com

Peter Nevland
This slam poet guy tours the world constantly, sharing heartfelt stories and rhymes that'll make you laugh. (DV)
spokengroove.com

Eliot Fitzgerald
Absolutely fabulous indie emo folk rock. Compelling vocals. (DV)
eliotfitzgerald.com

Here Your Proud Waves Must Stop
Good aggressive screamo with fantastic noises and sounds. (DV)
myspace.com/hereyourproudwavesmuststop

Awaiting This Desire
Great operatic and classical influenced post-hardcore. Great screams, melodies and guitar leads. (DV)
myspace.com/awaitingthisdesire

Dignan
Cool ambient multi-instrumental mood rock. (DV)
myspace.com/dignan

Big Rig
Any friends of The Showdown (David Bunton guest vocals on a song) are friends of mine. Big, tight, heavy and growling Southern-fried metal. (DV)
myspace.com/bigrigtn

Father Figure
Nice extreme. Love all the references to the South. There's nothing like being as heavy as stink and not taking it too seriously with fun lyrics. (DV)
myspace.com/fatherfiguremusic

Syrens
The Apocalyptic Musical is a progressive onslaught of extreme metal. (DV)
myspace.com/syrenstx

Blessed Is He
Very nice melodic guitar runs amidst the screams and the o's. (DV)
myspace.com/blessedishe

Frail
Well crafted melodic rock with instant sing-along-able vocals. (DV)
frailmusic.com

WARNING! UNRATED BY THE FASHION POLICE

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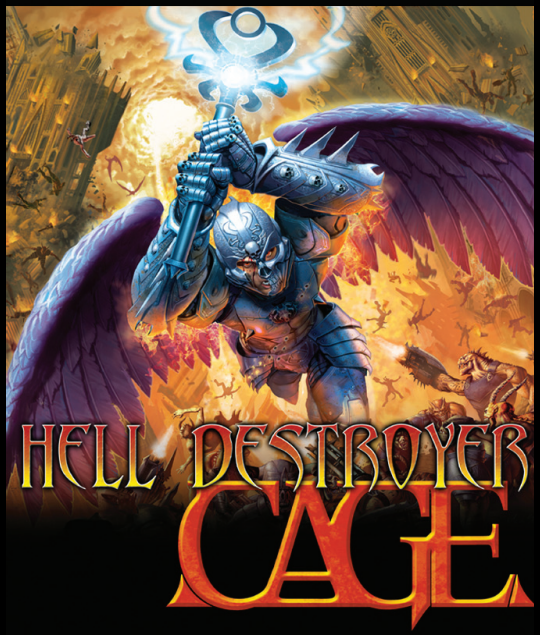

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A

DOUG BURR
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B

KISSING COUSINS
She's Right
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C

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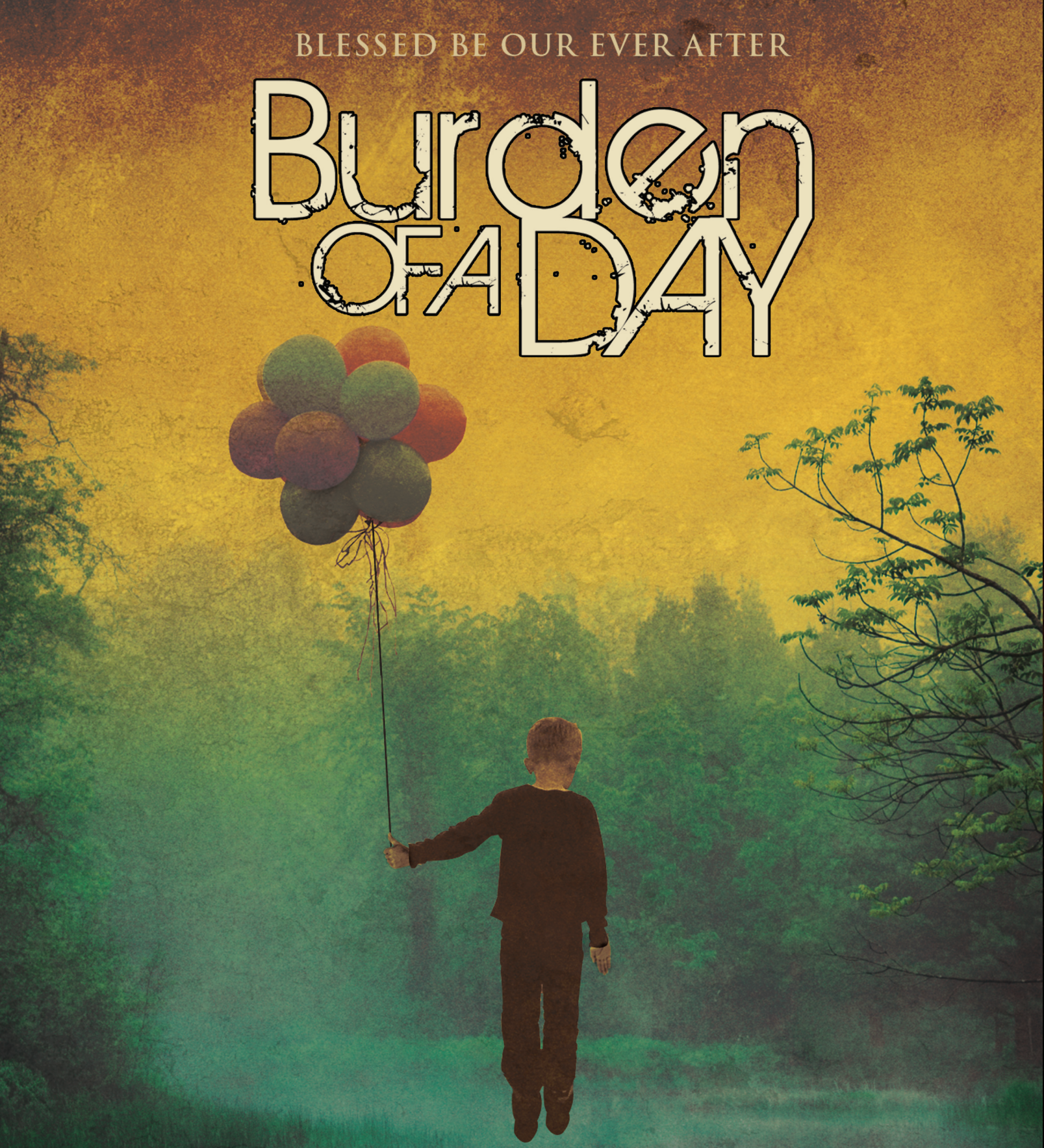

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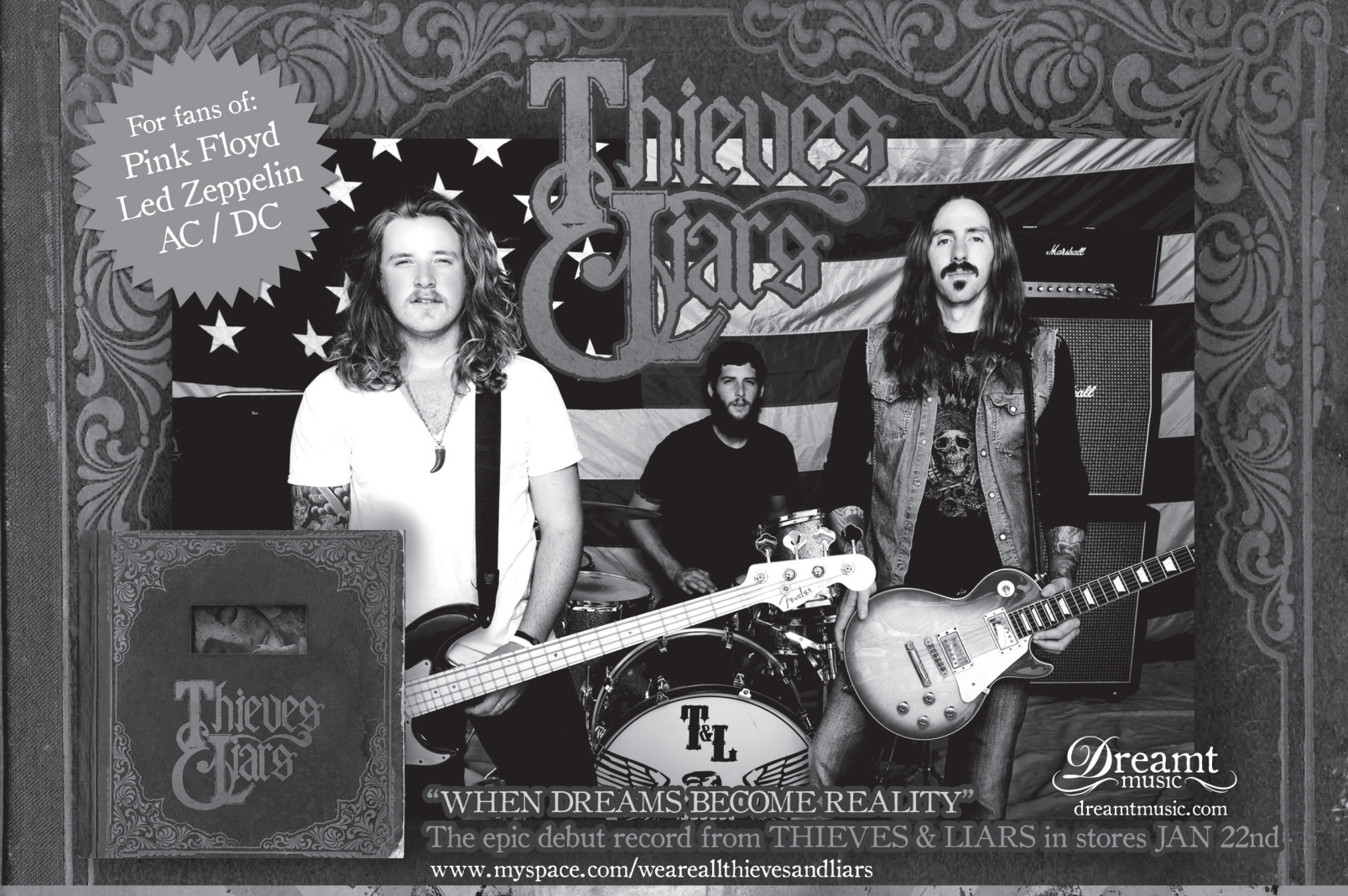
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